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ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
THE LITURGY AND RITUA

OF
The United Church of England and
Ireland:

BEING
SERMONS AND DISCOURSES,
SELECTED FROM
THE WORKS OF EMINENT DIVINES
WHO LIVED DURING THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

BY JAMES BROGDEN, M.A.

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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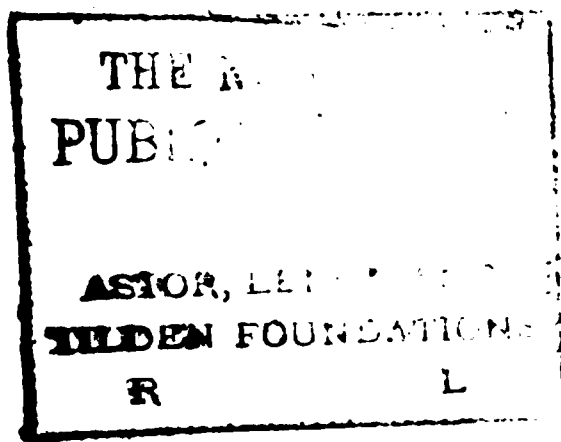
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HOLY COMMUNION.

ON THE EUCHARIST.

[ISAAC BARROW, D.D.]

AMONG the wonderful works of power and grace performed by God Almighty in favour of the children of Israel, and in order to their delivery from the Egyptian slavery, a most signal one was the smiting the first-born in every house of the Egyptians, and passing over the houses of the children of Israel; wherein God declared his just wrath against their cruel oppressors, depriving them in a sudden and dreadful manner of what was nearest and dearest to them; and his gracious mercy toward them, in preserving what was alike dear to them from so woful a calamity^a; “thus” (as the text expresseth it) “putting a difference between the Egyptians and the children of Israel.” Now, that the memory of so remarkable a mercy might be preserved, that their affections might be raised to a strong sense of God’s goodness, and their faith in him confirmed, so as in the like need to hope for the same favourable help and protection, by the consideration of so notable an experiment, it pleased God to appoint a sacrament, or mysterious rite, to be annually celebrated, representing and recalling to mind that act of God, wherein his

^a Cypr. Ep. 63.

special kindness was so eminently demonstrated toward his people: the same also (as did other rites and sacrifices instituted by God among that people) looking directly forward upon that other great delivery from sin and hell, which God in mercy designed toward mankind, to be achieved by our Saviour; prefiguring, that the souls of them who should be willing to forsake the spiritual bondage of sin, should be saved from the ruin coming upon them who would abide therein; God regarding the blood of our Saviour (that immaculate Lamb sacrificed for them) sprinkled upon the doors of their houses^a; that is, by hearty faith and repentance applied to their consciences.^b The occasion of celebrating which holy rite, our Saviour, we see, did improve to the institution of this sacrament, most agreeing therewith in design, as representative and commemorative of the greatest blessing and mercy that we are capable of having vouchsafed to us; some part of that ancient rite or sacrifice (which was most suitable to the special purposes of this institution, and most conformable to the general constitution of the Christian religion, whereby all bloody sacrifices are abolished) being retained in this.

The action itself (or rather the whole rite, consisting of divers actions) we see plainly described in the Gospels, and in the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, distinguishable into these chief parts:—
1. The benediction and consecration (by prayer and thanksgiving) of bread and wine.^c 2. The breaking of

^a *Exod. xii. 23.*

^c *1 Tim. iv. 5.*

^b *Heb. x. 22. 1 Pet. i. 2.*

bread and handling the cup.^a 3. The delivery and distribution of them to the persons present.^b 4. The declaration accompanying that delivery, that those symbolical things and actions did represent our Saviour's body given and broken, our Saviour's blood shed and poured out for us, in sanction of the new covenant.^c 5. The actual partaking of those symbols, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, done by all present.^d These things we find done at the first institution and exemplary practice of this holy ceremony; the which our Saviour obliged us to imitate, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." There followeth, in St. Matthew and St. Mark, presently after the narration concerning these particulars, *Kαὶ ὑμνήσαντες*, "And having sung a hymn, they went to the mount of Olives^e:" which action was indeed, in itself, proper to conclude the practice of this holy rite; yet what reference it hath thereto cannot thence be determined: however, with these the Church hath always joined several acts of devotion (confessions, prayers, praises, thanksgivings, intercessions, vows) suitable to the nature and design of the sacrament, apt to glorify God, and edify the faithful in the celebration thereof.

Such is the practice itself instituted and enjoined by our Saviour; the mysterious importance thereof, as we find it explained in Holy Scripture (the only solid and sure ground upon which we can build the explication

^a Luke, xxii. 19, 20. *εὐχαριστήσας*.

^b 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. *ἔκλασε*.

^c Luke, xxii. 17. *διαμερίσατε*.

^d Mark, xiv. 22, 23, 24. *ἐπιον ἅπαντες*.

^e Mat. xxvi. 30. Mark, xiv. 26.

of supernatural mysteries), consisteth chiefly in these particulars: —

1. It was intended for a commemorative representation of our Saviour's passion for us; fit to mind us of it, to move us to consider it, to beget affections in us suitable to the memory and consideration thereof: *Τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*. "Do this," saith our Lord, "for my remembrance^a," or, "in commemoration of me;" that is, so as thereby to have raised in you a reflection of mind and heart upon those grievous pains which I shall have endured for your sake, to procure for you a remission of sins and reconciliation to God: and, "so often," saith St. Paul, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," *καταγγέλλετε*, "ye tell forth" (or significantly express) "the death of our Lord, till he come^b," or during his absence from us. The suffering of our Saviour (the most wonderful act of goodness and charity that ever was performed in the world, which produced effects of highest consequence to our benefit, the consideration whereof is apt to work the best dispositions of piety in us) should very frequently be present to our thoughts and affections; and that it may be so with advantage, such a solemn and sensible representation thereof is very conducive; wherein we behold him crucified, as it were *in effigie*, his body broken, his blood poured out for us; it being, in a sort, a putting us into the circumstances of those who did behold our Saviour for us hanging upon the cross. Our Lord being absent in body from us (sitting in *heaven at God's right hand*), to supply that absence,

^a *Luke, xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 25.*

^b *1 Cor. xi. 26.*

that we should not be apt to forget him, and thereby become wholly estranged from him, is pleased to order this occasion of being present, and conversing with us, in such a manner, as may retain in our memories his gracious performances for us; may impress in our hearts a kindly sense of them; may raise us up in mind and affection to him.

2. The benefits consequent upon our Saviour's passion, rightly apprehended, heartily believed, seriously considered by us, are hereby lively represented, and effectually conveyed, to the sustenance and nourishment of our spiritual life, to the refreshment and comfort of our souls. It is a holy feast, a spiritual repast, a divine entertainment, to which God in kindness invites us; to which if we come with well-disposed minds, he there feeds us with most holy and delicious viands, with heavenly manna, with most reviving and cherishing liquor. Bread is the staff of life, the most common, most necessary, and most wholesome, and most savoury meat; wine is the most pleasant and wholesome also, the most sprightly and cordial drink: by them, therefore, our Lord chose to represent that body and blood, by the oblation of which a capacity of life and health was procured to mankind; the taking in which by right apprehension, tasting it by hearty faith, digesting it by careful attention and meditation, converting it into our substance by devout, grateful, and holy affections, joined with serious and steady resolutions of living answerable thereto, will certainly support and maintain our spiritual life in a vigorous health and happy growth of grace; refreshing our hearts with comfort and satis-

faction unspeakable. “He that doeth thus, eats our Saviour’s flesh, and drinks his blood^a,” (that is, who, as our Saviour interpreteth it, “doth believe in him,” that belief importing all other acts of mind and will connected with right persuasions concerning him,) “hath eternal life,” and shall live for ever, as himself declares and promises: which benefits, therefore, in the due performance of this holy duty, are conveyed unto us.

3. This sacrament declares that union which good Christians partaking thereof have with Christ; their mystical insertion into him, by a close dependence upon him for spiritual life, mercy, grace, and salvation^b; a constant adherence to him by faith and obedience; a near conformity to him in mind and affection; an inseparable conjunction with him, by the strictest bands of fidelity, and by the most endearing relations: which things could not more fitly be set out than by the partaking our best and most necessary food; which, being taken in, soon becomes united to us, assimilated and converted into our substance; thereby renewing our strength, and repairing the decays of our nature: wherefore, “He,” saith our Saviour, “that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him^c,” and, “The cup of blessing,” saith St. Paul, “which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”^d We in the outward action partake of the symbols representing our Saviour’s body and blood; we in the spiritual intention

^a *John*, vi. 51, 47. ; 35. 36.

^c *John*, vi. 56.

^b *John*, xv. 4.

^d *1 Cor.* x. 16.

communicate of his very person, being (according to the manner insinuated) intimately united to him.

4. By this sacrament, consequently, is signified and sealed that union which is among our Saviour's true disciples communicating therein; their being together united in consent of mind and unity of faith; in mutual goodwill and affection, in hope, and tendency to the same blessed end, in spiritual brotherhood and society; especially upon account of their communion with Christ, which most closely ties them one to another; they partaking of this one individual food, become translated, as it were, into one body and substance.^a "Seeing," saith St. Paul, "we being many, are one bread, one body; for all of us do partake of one bread."^b

In the representing, producing, and promoting these things, we are taught the mystery of this sacrament doth consist; it was designed as a proper and efficacious instrument to raise in us pious affections toward our good God and gracious Redeemer; to dispose us to all holy practice; to confirm our faith, to nourish our hope, to quicken our resolutions of walking carefully in the ways of duty; to unite us more fastly to our Saviour, and to combine us in charity one toward another; the accomplishing of which intents thereof doth suppose our faithful and diligent concurrence in the use thereof: whence arise many duties incumbent upon us in respect thereto; some antecedent, some concomitant, some consequent to the use thereof.

1. Before we address ourselves to the partaking of this venerable mystery, we should consider whither we

^a *Vid. Cyp. Ep. lxiii. p. 146. ; lxvii. p. 208.*

^b *1 Cor. x. 17.*

are going, what is the nature and importance of the action we set ourselves about ; that we are approaching to “ our Lord’s table^a” (so St. Paul calleth it), to come into his more especial presence, to be entertained by him with the dearest welcome and the best cheer that can be ; to receive the fullest testimonies of his mercy, and the surest pledges of his favour toward us ; that we are going to behold our Lord in tenderest love, offering up himself a sacrifice to God, therein undergoing the sorest pains and foulest disgraces for our good and salvation ; that we ought, therefore, to bring with us dispositions of soul suitable to such an access unto, such an intercourse with, our gracious Lord. Had we the honour and favour to be invited to the table of a great prince, what especial care should we have to dress our bodies in a clean and decent garb, to compose our minds in order to expression of all due respect to him ; to bring nothing about us noisome or ugly, that might offend his sight or displease his mind : the like, surely, and greater care, we should apply, when we thus being called do go into God’s presence and communion. We should, in preparation thereto, with all our power, endeavour to cleanse our souls from all impurity of thought and desire ; from all iniquity and perverseness ; from all malice, envy, hatred, anger, and all such evil dispositions, which are most offensive to God’s all-piercing sight, and unbeseeming his glorious presence ; we should dress our souls with all those comely ornaments of grace (with purity, humility, meekness, and charity) which *will render us acceptable and well-pleasing to him ; we*

^a 1 Cor. x. 21.

should compose our minds into a frame of reverence and awful regard to the majesty of God; into a lowly, calm, and tender disposition of heart, apt to express all respect due to his presence, fit to admit the gracious illapses of his Holy Spirit; very susceptible of all holy and heavenly affections which are suitable to such a communion, or may spring from it. We should therefore remove and abandon from us, not only all vicious inclinations and evil purposes, but even all worldly cares, desires, and passions, which may distract or discompose us, that may dull or deject us, that may cause us to behave ourselves indecently or unworthily before God, that may bereave us of the excellent fruits from so blessed an entertainment.

To these purposes we should, according to St. Paul's advice, *δοκιμάζειν ἑαυτοὺς*, "examine and approve ourselves^a," considering our past actions and our present inclinations; and, accordingly, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer to God for his gracious assistance therein, working our souls into a hearty remorse for our past miscarriages, and a sincere resolution to amend for the future; forsaking all sin; endeavouring, in all our actions, to serve and please God; "purging out," as St. Paul again enjoineth us, "the old leaven of vice and wickedness^b," so that we may feast, and celebrate this passover, in which Christ is mystically sacrificed for us, in the unleavened dispositions of sincerity and truth. Such are the duties previous to our partaking this sacrament.

2. Those duties which accompany it are, a reverent

^a 1 Cor. xi. 28.

^b 1 Cor. v. 7.

and devout affection of heart, with a suitable behaviour therein; an awful sense of mind, befitting the majesty of that Presence wherein we do appear, answerable to the greatness, and goodness, and holiness of Him with whom we converse, becoming the sacredness of those mysteries which are exhibited to us: that which St. Paul seemeth to call *διακρίνειν τὸ σῶμα Κυρίου*, to “discern” or distinguish “our Lord’s body^a”; that is, yielding a peculiar reverence of mind and behaviour in regard thereto; a devotion of heart, consisting in hearty contrition for our sins, which did expose our Saviour to the enduring such pains, then remembered; in firm resolution to forsake the like thereafter, as injurious, dishonourable, and displeasing to him; in fervent love of him, as full of so wonderful goodness and charity toward us; in most hearty thankfulness for those unconceivably great expressions of kindness toward us; in deepest humility, upon sense of our unworthiness to receive such testimonies of grace and favour from him, (our unworthiness “to eat the crumbs that fall from his table,” how much more to be admitted into such degrees of honourable communion and familiarity, of close conjunction and union with him!) of pious joy in consideration of the excellent privileges herein imparted, and of the blessed fruits accruing to us from his gracious performances; in a comfortable hope of obtaining and enjoying the benefits of his obedience and passion, by the assistance of his grace; in steady faith and full persuasion of mind, that he is (supposing our dutiful compliance) ready to bestow upon us all the

^a 1 Cor. xi. 29.

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blessings then exhibited ; in attentively fixing the eye
of our mind and all the powers of our soul (our understanding, will, memory, fancy, affection) upon him
as willingly pouring forth his life for our salvation
lastly, in motions of enlarged goodwill and charity
toward all our brethren for his sake, in obedience
his will, and in imitation of him : such like duties
should attend our participation of this holy sacrament

3. The effects of having duly performed which
should appear in the practice of those duties which
consequent thereon ; being such as these : an increase
of all pious inclinations and affections, expressing themselves
in a real amendment of our lives, and producing
more goodly fruits of obedience ; the thorough digestion
of that spiritual nourishment, by our becoming
more fastly knit to our Saviour by higher degrees
of faith and love ; the maintaining a more lively sense
of his superabundant goodness ; the cherishing those influences
of grace which descend upon our hearts in communion,
and improving them to nearer degrees of perfection
in all piety and virtue ; a watchful care and endeavour
in our lives to approve ourselves in some measure
worthy of that great honour and favour which
God hath vouchsafed us in admitting us to so near
approaches to himself ; an earnest pursuance of
our resolutions, performance of the vows, making good
engagements, which in so solemn a manner, upon
great an occasion, we made, and offered up unto
God and Saviour ; finally, the considering that by
breach of such resolutions, by the violation of our
engagements, our sins receiving so mighty aggravation

of vain inconstancy and wicked perfidiousness, our guilt will hugely be increased; our souls relapsing into so grievous distemper, our spiritual strength will be exceedingly impaired; consequently, hence our true comforts will be abated, our best hopes will be shaken, our eternal state will be desperately endangered.

There is one duty which I should not forbear to touch concerning this sacrament: that is, our gladly embracing any opportunity presented of communicating therein; the doing so being not only our duty, but a great aid and instrument of piety; the neglecting it a grievous sin, and productive of great mischiefs to us.

The primitive Christians did very frequently use it, partaking therein, as it seems, at every time of their meeting for God's service; it is said of them by St. Luke, that "they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and communion, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers^a;" and, "When you meet together, it is not" (as, according to the intent and duty of meeting, it should be) "to eat the Lord's supper^b," saith St. Paul; and Justin Martyr, in his second apology, describing the religious service of God in their assemblies, mentioneth it as a constant part thereof; and Epiphanius reporteth it a custom in the Church, derived from apostolical institution, to celebrate the Eucharist thrice every week, that is, so often as they did meet to pray and praise God; which practice may well be conceived a great means of kindling and preserving in them that holy fervour of piety which they so illustriously expressed in their conversation, and in their gladsome

^a Acts, ii. 42.

^b 1 Cor. x. 20.

suffering for Christ's sake; and the remitting of that frequency, as it is certainly a sign and an effect, so in part it may possibly be reckoned a cause of the degeneracy of Christian practice into that great coldness and slackness which afterward did seize upon it, and now doth apparently keep it in a languishing and half-dying state.

The rarer occasions, therefore, we now have of performing this duty, (the which, indeed, was always esteemed the principal office of God's service,) of enjoying this benefit (the being deprived whereof was also deemed the greatest punishment and infelicity that could arrive to a Christian), the more ready we should be to embrace them. If we dread God's displeasure, if we value our Lord and his benefits, if we tender the life, health, and welfare of our souls, we shall not neglect it; for how can we but extremely offend God by so extreme rudeness, that when he kindly invites us to his table, we are averse from coming thither, or utterly refuse it? that when he calleth us into his presence, we run from him? that when he, with his own hand, offereth us inestimable mercies and blessings, we reject them? It is not only the breach of God's command, who enjoined us to do this, but a direct contempt of his favour and goodness, most clearly and largely exhibited in this office. And how can we bear any regard to our Lord, or be anywise sensible of his gracious performances in our behalf, if we are unwilling to join in thankful and joyful commemoration of them? How little do we love our own souls, if we suffer them to pine and starve for want of that food which God

here dispenseth for their sustenance and comfort? if we bereave them of enjoying so high a privilege, so inestimable a benefit, so incomparable pleasures as are to be found and felt in this service, or do spring and flow from it? What reasonable excuse can we frame for such neglect? Are we otherwise employed? What business can there be more important than serving God, and saving our own souls? Is it wisdom, in pursuance of any the greatest affair here, to disregard the principal concern of our souls? Do we think ourselves unfit and unworthy to appear in God's presence? But is any man unworthy to obey God's commands? Is any man unfit to implore and partake of God's mercy, if he be not unwilling to do it? What unworthiness should hinder us from remembering our Lord's excessive charity towards us, and thanking him for it; from praying for his grace; from resolving to amend our lives? Must we, because we are unworthy, continue so still, by shunning the means of correcting and curing us? Must we increase our unworthiness, by transgressing our duty? If we esteem things well, the conscience of our sinfulness should rather drive us to it, as to our medicine, than detain us from it. There is no man, indeed, who must not conceive and confess himself unworthy: therefore must no man come thither at God's call? If we have a sense of our sins, and a mind to leave them; if we have a sense of God's goodness, and a heart to thank him for it; we are so worthy, that we shall be kindly received there, and graciously rewarded. If we will not take a little care to work these dispositions in us, we are indeed unworthy; but *the being so*, from our own perverse negligence, is a

bad excuse for the neglect of our duty. In fine, I dare say that he who, with an honest meaning (although with an imperfect devotion), doth address himself to the performance of this duty, is far more excusable than he that, upon whatever score, declineth it; no scrupulous shyness can ward us from blame; what, then, shall we say, if supine sloth, or profane contempt, are the causes of such neglect?

Ὡςπερ γὰρ τὸ ὡς ἔτυχε προσιέναι κίνδυνος, οὕτω τὸ μὴ κοινωνεῖν τῶν μυστικῶν δείπνων ἐκείνων, λιμὸς καὶ θάνατος. Αὕτη γὰρ ἡ τράπεζα τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν τὰ νεύρα, τῆς διανοίας ὁ σύνδεσμος, τῆς παρρησίας ἡ ὑπόθεσις, ἡ ἐλπίς, ἡ σωτηρία, τὸ φῶς, ἡ ζωή. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. 24.

Thus, having briefly dispatched the considerations that offered themselves upon these subjects, I shall conclude all with prayer to Almighty God, that we, by his grace and help, believing rightly, strongly, constantly, and finally, being frequent and fervent in prayer, and all pious devotion; sincerely obeying all God's commandments; continuing orderly, dutiful, and worthy members of Christ's Church, growing continually in grace, by the worthy participation of the holy sacraments, may obtain the end of our faith, the success of our prayers, the reward of our obedience, the continuance in that holy society, the perfect consummation of grace in the possession of eternal joy, glory, and bliss. Which God in his infinite mercy grant to us, for our blessed Saviour's sake: to whom be all glory and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

^a Mens deficit, quam non recepta Eucharistia erigit et accendit. Cyp. Ep. 54.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

[RICHARD HOOKER.]

THE grace which we have by the holy Eucharist doth not begin but continue life. No man, therefore, receiveth this sacrament before baptism, because no dead thing is capable of nourishment. That which groweth must of necessity first live. If our bodies did not daily waste, food to restore them were a thing superfluous. And it may be that the grace of baptism would serve to eternal life, were it not that the state of our spiritual being is daily so much hindered and impaired after baptism. In that life, therefore, where neither body nor soul can decay, our souls shall as little require this sacrament as our bodies corporal nourishment. But as long as the days of our warfare last, during the time that we are both subject to diminution and capable of augmentation in grace, the words of our Lord and Saviour Christ will remain forcible : “ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”^a

Life being therefore proposed unto all men as their *end*, they which by baptism have laid the foundation

^a John, vi. 53.

and attained the first beginning of a new life, have here their nourishment and food prescribed for continuance of life in them. Such as will live the life of God must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, because this is a part of that diet which if we want we cannot live. Whereas, therefore, in our infancy we are incorporated into Christ, and by baptism receive the grace of his Spirit without any sense or feeling of the gift which God bestoweth; in the Eucharist we so receive the gift of God, that we know by grace what the grace is which God giveth us; the degrees of our own increase in holiness and virtue, we see and can judge of them; we understand that the strength of our life begun in Christ is Christ, that his flesh is meat and his blood drink, not by surmised imagination, but truly, even so truly, that through faith we perceive in the body and blood sacramentally presented the very taste of eternal life: the grace of the sacrament is here as the food which we eat and drink.

This was it that some did exceedingly fear, lest Zuinglius and Ecolampadius would bring to pass, that men should account of this sacrament but only as of a shadow, destitute, empty, and void of Christ. But seeing that by opening the several opinions which have been held, they are grown, for aught I can see, on all sides, at the length, to a general agreement concerning that which alone is material, namely, the real participation of Christ, and of life in his body and blood by means of this sacrament; wherefore should the world continue still distracted and rent with so manifold contentions, when there remaineth now no controversy

saving only about the subject where Christ is? Yea, even in this point, no side denieth but that the soul of man is the receptacle of Christ's presence. Whereby the question is yet driven to a narrower issue, nor doth any thing rest doubtful but this, whether, when the sacrament is administered, Christ be whole within man only, or else his body and blood be also externally seated in the very consecrated elements themselves; which opinion they that defend are driven either to consubstantiate and incorporate Christ with elements sacramental, or to transubstantiate and change their substance into his; and so the one to hold him really but invisibly moulded up with the substance of those elements, the other to hide him under the only visible show of bread and wine, the substance whereof, as they imagine, is abolished, and his succeeded in the same room.

All things considered and compared with that success which truth hath hitherto had by so bitter conflicts with errors in this point, shall I wish that men would more give themselves to meditate with silence what we have by the sacrament, and less to dispute of the manner how? If any man suppose that this were too great stupidity and dullness, let us see whether the Apostles of our Lord themselves have not done the like. It appeareth by many examples that they of their own disposition were very scrupulous and inquisitive, yea, in other cases of less importance and less difficulty, always apt to move questions. How cometh it to pass that so *few words* of so high a mystery being uttered, they *receive with gladness* the gift of Christ, and make no

show of doubt or scruple? The reason hereof is not dark to them which have anything at all observed how the powers of the mind are wont to stir when that which we infinitely long for presenteth itself above and besides expectation. Curious and intricate speculations do hinder, they abate, they quench such inflamed motions of delight and joy as divine graces use to raise when extraordinarily they are present. The mind, therefore, feeling present joy, is always marvellous unwilling to admit any other cogitation, and in that case casteth off those disputes whereunto the intellectual part at other times easily draweth.

A manifest effect whereof may be noted, if we compare with our Lord's disciples in the twentieth of John the people that are said in the sixth of John to have gone after him to Capernaum. These leaving him on the one side the Sea of Tiberias, and finding him again as soon as themselves by ship were arrived on the contrary side, whither they knew that by ship he came not, and by land the journey was longer than according to the time he could have to travel, as they wondered, so they asked also, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"^a The disciples, when Christ appeared to them in far more strange and miraculous manner, moved no question, but rejoiced greatly in that they saw. For why? The one sort beheld only that in Christ which they knew was more than natural, but yet their affection was not rapt therewith through any great extraordinary gladness; the other, when they looked on Christ, were not ignorant that they saw the wellspring of their own ever-

^a John, vi. 25.

lasting felicity : the one, because they enjoyed not, disputed ; the other disputed not, because they enjoyed.

If, then, the presence of Christ with them did so much move, judge what their thoughts and affections were at the time of this new presentation of Christ, not before their eyes, but within their souls. They had learned before that his flesh and blood are the true cause of eternal life ; that this they are not by the bare force of their own substance, but through the dignity and worth of his person which offered them up by way of sacrifice for the life of the whole world, and doth make them still effectual thereunto ; finally, that to us they are life in particular, by being particularly received. Thus much they knew, although as yet they understood not perfectly to what effect or issue the same would come ; till at the length, being assembled for no other cause which they could imagine but to have eaten the Passover only that Moses appointeth, when they saw their Lord and Master, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, first bless and consecrate, for the endless good of all generations till the world's end, the chosen elements of bread and wine, which elements made for ever the instruments of life by virtue of his divine benediction, they being the first that were commanded to receive from him, the first which were warranted by his promise that not only unto them at the present time, but to whomsoever they and their successors after them did duly administer the same, those mysteries should *serve as conducts of life and conveyances of his body and blood unto them*, — was it possible they should hear *that voice*, “ Take, eat, this is my body ; drink ye all of

this, this is my blood ;” — possible that, doing what was required, and believing what was promised, the same should have present effect in them, and not fill them with a kind of fearful admiration at the heaven which they saw in themselves? They had at that time a sea of comfort and joy to wade in ; and we, by that which they did, are taught that this heavenly food is given for the satisfying of our empty souls, and not for the exercising of our curious and subtile wits.

If we doubt what those admirable words may import, let him be our teacher for the meaning of Christ to whom Christ was himself a schoolmaster : let our Lord’s Apostle be his interpreter ; content we ourselves with his explication : “ My body, the communion of my body ;” “ my blood, the communion of my blood.” Is there any thing more expedite, clear, and easy, than that as Christ is termed our life because through him we obtain life, so the parts of this sacrament are his body and blood, for that they are so to us, who, receiving them, receive that by them which they are termed? The bread and cup are his body and blood, because they are causes instrumental upon the receipt whereof the participation of his body and blood ensueth. For that which produceth any certain effect is not vainly nor improperly said to be that very effect whereunto it tendeth. Every cause is in the effect which groweth from it. Our souls and bodies quickened to eternal life, are effects the cause whereof is the person of Christ ; his body and blood are the true wellspring out of which this life floweth. So that his body and blood are in that very subject whereunto they minister life,

not only by effect or operation, even as the influence of the heavens is in plants, beasts, men, and in every thing which they quicken, but also by a far more divine and mystical kind of union, which maketh us one with him, even as he and the Father are one.

The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament.

And with this the very order of our Saviour's words agreeth: first, "take and eat;" then, "this is my body, which was broken for you:" first, "drink ye all of this;" then followeth, "this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."^a I see not which way it should be gathered by the words of Christ when and where the bread is his body or the cup his blood, but only in the very heart and soul of him which receiveth them. As for the sacraments, they really exhibit, but, for aught we can gather out of that which is written of them, they are not really, nor do really contain in themselves, that grace which, with them or by them, it pleaseth God to bestow.

If, on all sides, it be confessed that the grace of baptism is poured into the soul of man, that by water we receive it, although it be neither seated in the water nor the water changed into it, what should induce men to think that the grace of the Eucharist must needs be in the Eucharist before it can be in us that receive it?

The fruit of the Eucharist is the participation of the body and blood of Christ. There is no sentence of

^a Mark, xiv. 22.

Holy Scripture which saith that we cannot by this sacrament be made partakers of his body and blood except they be first contained in the sacrament or the sacrament converted into them. “This is my body,” and “this is my blood,” being words of promise, since we all agree that by the sacrament Christ doth really and truly in us perform his promise, why do we vainly trouble ourselves with so fierce contentions whether, by consubstantiation, or else by transubstantiation, the sacrament itself be first possessed with Christ, or no? A thing which no way can either further or hinder us, howsoever it stand, because our participation of Christ in this sacrament dependeth on the co-operation of his omnipotent power, which maketh it his body and blood to us, whether with change or without alteration of the element, such as they imagine, we need not greatly to care nor inquire.

Take, therefore, that wherein all agree, and then consider by itself what cause why the rest in question should not rather be left as superfluous than urged as necessary. It is on all sides plainly confessed, first, that this sacrament is a true and a real participation of Christ, who thereby imparteth himself, even his whole entire person, as a mystical head, unto every soul that receiveth him, and that every such receiver doth thereby incorporate or unite himself unto Christ as a mystical member of him, yea, of them also whom he acknowledgeth to be his own; secondly, that to whom the person of Christ is thus communicated, to them he giveth by the *same sacrament* his Holy Spirit, to sanctify them, as it sanctifieth him which is their head;

thirdly, that what merit, force, or virtue soever there is in his sacrificed body and blood, we freely, fully, and wholly have it by this sacrament; fourthly, that the effect thereof in us is a real transmutation of our souls and bodies from sin to righteousness, from death and corruption to immortality and life; fifthly, that because the sacrament, being of itself but a corruptible and earthly creature, must needs be thought an unlikely instrument to work so admirable effects in man, we are therefore to rest ourselves altogether upon the strength of his glorious power who is able and will bring to pass that the bread and cup which he giveth us shall be truly the thing he promiseth.

It seemeth, therefore, much amiss that against them whom they term Sacramentaries so many invective discourses are made, all running upon two points; that the Eucharist is not a bare sign or figure only, and that the efficacy of his body and blood is not all we receive in this sacrament. For no man, having read their books and writings which are thus traduced, can be ignorant that both these assertions they plainly confess to be most true. They do not so interpret the words of Christ as if the name of his body did import but the figure of his body; and to be, were only to signify his blood. They grant that these holy mysteries, received in due manner, do instrumentally both make us partakers of the grace of that body and blood which were given for the life of the world, and besides, also, impart *unto us, even in true and real, though mystical, manner, the very person of our Lord himself, whole, perfect, and entire, as hath been showed.*

Now, whereas all three opinions do thus far accord in one, that strong conceit which two of the three have embraced as touching a literal, corporal, and oral manducation of the very substance of his flesh and blood, is surely an opinion no where delivered in Holy Scripture, whereby they should think themselves bound to believe it, and (to speak with the softest terms we can use) greatly prejudiced in that when some others did so conceive of eating his flesh, our Savionr, to abate that error in them, gave them directly to understand how his flesh so eaten could profit them nothing, because the words which he spake were spirit, that is to say, they had a reference to a mystical participation, which mystical participation giveth life. Wherein there is small appearance of likelihood that his meaning should be only to make them Marcionites by inversion, and to teach them that as Marcion did think Christ seemed to be a man but was not, so they contrariwise should believe that Christ, in truth, would so give them, as they thought, his flesh to eat, but yet, lest the horror thereof should offend them, he would not seem to do that he did.

When they which have this opinion of Christ in that blessed sacrament go about to explain themselves, and to open after what manner things are brought to pass, the one sort lay the union of Christ's deity with his manhood as their first foundation and ground; from thence they infer a power which the body of Christ hath thereby to present itself in all places; out of which ubiquity of *his body* they gather the presence thereof *with that sanctified bread and wine* of our Lord's table;

the conjunction of his body and blood with those elements they use as an argument to show how the bread may as well in that respect be termed his body because his body is therewith joined, as the Son of God may be named man by reason that God and man in the person of Christ are united; to this they add how the words of Christ commanding us to eat must needs import, that as he hath coupled the substance of his flesh and the substance of bread together, so we together should receive both; which labyrinth as the other sort doth justly shun, so the way which they take to the same inn is somewhat more short, but no whit more certain. For through God's omnipotent power they imagine that transubstantiation followeth upon the words of consecration, and upon transubstantiation the participation of Christ's both body and blood in the only shape of sacramental elements.

So that they all three do plead God's omnipotency: sacramentaries to that alteration which the rest confess he accomplisheth; the patrons of transubstantiation, over and besides that, to the change of one substance into another; the followers of consubstantiation to the kneading up of both substances as it were into one lump.

Touching the sentence of antiquity in this cause; first, forasmuch as they knew that the force of this sacrament doth necessarily presuppose the verity of Christ's both body and blood, they used oftentimes the *same as an argument* to prove that Christ hath as truly *the substance* of man as of God, because here we receive *Christ*, and those graces which flow from him, in that

he is man. So that if he have no such being, neither can the sacrament have any such meaning as we all confess it hath. Thus Tertullian^a, thus Irenæus^b, thus Theodoret^c disputeth.

Again, as evident it is how they teach that Christ is personally there present, yea, present whole, albeit a part of Christ be corporally absent from thence; that Christ^d, assisting this heavenly banquet with his personal and true presence^e, doth, by his own divine power, add to the natural substance thereof supernatural efficacy, which^f addition to the nature of those conse-

^a “Acceptum panem, et distributum discipulis, corpus illum suum fecit, ‘hoc est corpus meum’ dicendo, id est, figura corporis mei. Figura autem non fuisset, nisi veritatis esset corpus: cæterum, vacua res, quod est phantasma, figuram capere non posset.” *Tertull. contra Marc. lib. iv. cap. 40.*

^b “Si autem non salvetur hæc,” (that is to say, if it should be true which heretics have taught, denying that Christ took upon him the very nature of man,) “videlicet, nec Dominus sanguine suo redemit nos, neque calix Eucharistiæ communicatio sanguinis ejus est, nec panis quem frangimus communicatio corporis ejus est. Sanguis enim non est nisi a venis et carnibus et a reliqua quæ est secundum hominem substantia.” *Iren. lib. v. cap. 2.*

^c Εἰ τοίνυν τοῦ ὄντος σώματος ἀντίτυπὸν ἐστὶ τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια, σῶμα ἄρα ἐστὶ καὶ νῦν τοῦ δεσπότου τὸ σῶμα, οὐκ εἰς θεότητος φύσιν μεταβληθὲν ἀλλὰ θείας δόξης ἀναπλησθέν. *Theodor. Ἀσύγχυτος.*

^d “Sacramenta quidem quantum in se est sine propria virtute esse non possunt, nec ullo modo se absentat majestas mysteriis.” *Cypr. de Cæn. cap. 7.*

^e “Sacramento visibili ineffabiliter divina se infudit essentia, ut esset religioni circa sacramenta devotio.” *Idem, cap. 6.* “Invisibilis sacerdos visibiles creaturas in substantiam corporis et sanguinis sui verbo suo secreta potestate convertit. . . . In spiritualibus sacramentis verbi præcipit virtus et servit effectus.” *Euseb. Emisen. Hom. 5. de Pasch.*

^f Τὰ σύμβολα τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ σώματος τε καὶ αἵματος ἅλλα μὲν εἰσι πρὸ τῆς ἱερατικῆς ἐπικλήσεως, μετὰ δέ γε τὴν ἐπίκλησιν μεταβάλλεται καὶ ἕτερα γίνεται. Ἄλλ’ οὐκ οὐκείας ἐξίσταται φύσεως. Μένει γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς προτέρας οὐσίας καὶ τοῦ σχήματος καὶ τοῦ εἶδους, καὶ ὁρατὰ ἐστὶ καὶ ἅπτα οἷα καὶ πρότερον ἦν, νοεῖται δὲ ἅπερ ἐγένετο, καὶ πιστεύεται, καὶ προσκυνεῖται ὡς ἐκεῖνα ὄντα ἅπερ πιστεύεται. *Theodor.* “Ex quo a Domino dictum est, Hoc facite in meam commemorationem, Hæc est caro mea, et Hic est sanguis meus, quotiescunque his verbis et hac fide actum est, panis iste supersubstantialis et calix benedictione solenni sacratus ad totius hominis

crated elements changeth them, and maketh them that unto us which otherwise they could not be; that to us they are thereby made such instruments as mystically^a yet truly, invisibly yet really, work our communion or fellowship with the person of Jesus Christ, as well in that he is man as God; our participation also in the fruit, grace, and efficacy of his body and blood, whereupon there ensueth a kind of transubstantiation in us, a true change^b both of soul and body, an alteration from death to life. In a word, it appeareth not that of all the ancient fathers of the Church any one did ever conceive or imagine other than only a mystical participation of Christ's both body and blood in the sacra-

vitam salutemque proficit." *Cypr. de Cæn. cap. 3.* "Immortalis alimonia datur, a communibus cibis differens, corporalis substantiæ retinens speciem sed virtutis divini invisibili efficientia probans adesse præsentiam." *Ibid. cap. 2.*

^a "Sensibilibus sacramentis inest vitæ æternæ effectus, et non tam corporali quam spirituali transitione Christo unimur. Ipse enim et panis et caro et sanguis, idem cibus et substantia et vita factus est Ecclesiæ suæ quam corpus suum appellat, dans ei participationem spiritus." *Cyprian. de Cæn. cap. 5.* "Nostra et ipsius conjunctio nec miscet personas nec unit substantias, sed effectus consociat et confœderat voluntates." *Ibid. cap. 6.* "Mansio nostra in ipso est manducatio, et potus quasi quædam incorporatio." *Ibid. cap. 9.* "Ille est in Patre per naturam divinitatis, nos in eo per corporalem ejus nativitatem, ille rursus in nobis per Sacramentorum mysterium." *Hilar. de Trin. lib. viii.*

^b "Panis hic azymus cibus verus et sincerus *per speciem et sacramentum* nos tactu sanctificat, fide illuminat, veritate Christo conformat." *Cypr. de Cæn. c. 6.* "Non aliud agit participatio corporis et sanguinis Christi quam ut in id quod sumimus transeamus, et in quo mortui et sepulti et corresuscitati sumus ipsum per omnia et spiritu et carne gestemus." *Leo de Pass. serm. 14.* "Quemadmodum qui est a terra panis percipiens Dei vocationem (id est facta invocatione divini numinis) jam non communis panis est, sed Eucharistia, ex duabus rebus constans terrena et cœlesti: sic et corpora nostra percipientia Eucharistiam jam non sunt corruptibilia, spem resurrectionis habentia." *Iren. lib. iv. cap. 34.* "Quoniam salutaris caro verbo Dei quod naturaliter vita est conjuncta vivifica effecta est, quando eam comedimus, tunc vitam habemus in nobis, *illi carni conjuncti quæ vita effecta est.*" *Cyrl. in Johan. lib. iv. cap. 14.*

ment, neither are their speeches concerning the change of the elements themselves into the body and blood of Christ such that a man can thereby, in conscience, assure himself it was their meaning to persuade the world either of a corporal consubstantiation of Christ with those sanctified and blessed elements before we receive them, or of the like transubstantiation of them into the body and blood of Christ: which both to our mystical communion with Christ are so unnecessary, that the fathers, who plainly hold but this mystical communion, cannot easily be thought to have meant any other change of sacramental elements than that which the same spiritual communion did require them to hold.

These things considered, how should that mind which, loving truth, and seeking comfort out of holy mysteries, hath not, perhaps the leisure, perhaps not the wit nor capacity, to tread out so endless mazes as the intricate disputes of this cause have led men into, how should a virtuously disposed mind better resolve with itself than thus: — “Variety of judgments and opinions argueth obscurity in those things whereabout they differ. But that which all parts receive for truth, that which every one having sifted is by no one denied or doubted of, must needs be matter of infallible certainty. Whereas, therefore, there are but three expositions made of ‘this is my body:’ the first, ‘This is in itself, before participation, really and truly the natural substance of my body, by reason of the co-existence which my omnipotent body hath with the *sanctified element of bread,*’ which is the Lutheran’s

interpretation ; the second, ‘ This is itself, and before participation, the very true and natural substance of my body, by force of that deity which with the words of consecration abolisheth the substance of bread, and substituteth in the place thereof my body,’ which is the Popish construction ; the last, ‘ This hallowed food, through concurrence of divine power, is in verity and truth, unto faithful receivers, instrumentally a cause of that mystical participation whereby, as I make myself wholly theirs, so I give them in hand an actual possession of all such saving grace as my sacrificed body can yield, and as their souls do presently need, this is to them, and in them, my body :’ of these three rehearsed interpretations, the last hath in it nothing but what the rest do all approve and acknowledge to be most true, nothing but that which the words of Christ are on all sides confessed to enforce, nothing but that which the Church of God hath always thought necessary, nothing but that which alone is sufficient for every Christian man to believe concerning the use and force of this sacrament ; finally, nothing but that wherewith the writings of all antiquity are consonant, and all Christian confessions agreeable. And as truth, in what kind soever, is by no kind of truth gainsayed, so the mind which resteth itself on this is never troubled with those perplexities which the other do both find by means of so great a contradiction between their opinions and true principles of reason grounded upon experience, nature, and sense. Which, albeit with boisterous courage and breath they seem oftentimes to blow away, yet whoso observeth how again they labour and

sweat, by subtlety of wit, to make some show of agreement between their peculiar conceits and the general edicts of nature, must needs perceive they struggle with that which they cannot fully master. Besides, sith that which is proper to themselves, their discourses are hungry and unpleasant, full of tedious and irksome labour, heartless, and hitherto without fruit; on the other side, read we them, or hear we others, be they our own or of ancienter times, to what part soever they be thought to incline touching that whereof there is controversy, yet in this, where they all speak but of one thing, their discourses are heavenly, their words sweet as the honeycomb, their tongues melodiously tuned instruments, their sentences mere consolation and joy: are we not hereby, almost even with voice from heaven admonished which we may safeliest cleave unto?

“He which hath said of the one sacrament, ‘We shall eat and be clean,’ hath said concerning the other likewise ‘Eat, and live.’ If, therefore, without any such particular and solemn warrant as this is, that poor distressed woman coming unto Christ for health could constantly resolve herself, ‘May I but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole,’ what moveth us to argue of the manner how life should come by bread, our duty being here but to take what is offered, and most assuredly to rest persuaded of this, that can we but eat, we are safe? When I behold with mine eyes some small and scarce discernible grain or seed which nature maketh promise that a tree shall come, and afterwards of that tree any skilful artificer undertakes to frame some exquisite and curious work, I

the event, I move no question about performance either of the one or of the other. Shall I simply credit nature in things natural, shall I in things artificial rely myself on art, never offering to make doubt, and in that which is above both art and nature refuse to believe the Author of both, except he acquaint me with his ways, and lay the secret of his skill before me? Where God himself doth speak those things which either for height and sublimity of matter, or else for secresy of performance, we are not able to reach unto, as we may be ignorant without danger, so it can be no disgrace to confess we are ignorant. Such as love piety will, as much as in them lieth, know all things that God commandeth, but especially the duties of service which they owe to God. As for his dark and hidden works, they prefer, as becometh them in such cases, simplicity of faith before that knowledge which, curiously sifting what it should adore, and disputing too boldly of that which the wit of man cannot search, chilleth for the most part all warmth of zeal, and bringeth soundness of belief many times into great hazard. Let it therefore be sufficient for me, presenting myself at the Lord's table, to know what there I receive from him, without searching or inquiring of the manner how Christ performeth his promise; let disputes and questions, enemies to piety, abatements of true devotion, and hitherto in this cause but over patiently heard, let them take their rest; let curious and sharp-witted men beat their heads about what questions themselves will, the very letter of the *word of Christ* giveth plain security that these *mysteries do, as nails, fasten us to his very cross, that by*

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them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force, & virtue, even the blood of his gored side ; in the wound of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are dyed both within and without, our hunger is satisfied and our thirst for ever quenched. They are things wonderful which he feeleth, great which he seeth, & unheard of which he uttereth, whose soul is possessed of this Paschal Lamb, and made joyful in the strength of this new wine. This bread hath in it more than substance which our eyes behold ; this cup, hallowed with solemn benediction, availeth to the endless life & welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins, as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving ; with touching it sanctifieth ; it enlighteneth with belief ; it truly conformeth us unto the image of Jesus Christ. What the elements are in themselves it skilleth not ; it is enough that to me which take them they are the body & blood of Christ, his promise in witness hereof suffice ; his word he knoweth which way to accomplish ; we should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, ‘ O my God, thou art true : my soul thou art happy ? ’ ”

Thus, therefore, we see that howsoever many opinions do otherwise vary, nevertheless, touching baptism and the supper of the Lord, we may with consent of the whole Christian world conclude they are necessary, the one to initiate or begin, the other to consummate or make perfect, our life in Christ.

LXVIII In administering the sacrament of

body and blood of Christ, the supposed faults of the Church of England are not greatly material, and therefore it shall suffice to touch them in few words. “The first is, that we do not use in a generality once for all to say to communicants, ‘Take, eat and drink,’ but unto every particular person, ‘Eat thou, drink thou;’ which is according to the popish manner, and not the form that our Saviour did use. Our second oversight is by gesture. For in kneeling there hath been superstition; sitting agreeth better to the action of a supper; and our Saviour, using that which was most fit, did himself not kneel. A third accusation is for not examining all communicants, whose knowledge in the mystery of the Gospel should that way be made manifest: a thing every where, they say, used in the Apostles’ times; because all things necessary were used, and this, in their opinion, is necessary, yea, it is commanded, inasmuch as the Levites^a are commanded to prepare the people for the Passover, and examination is a part of their preparation, our Lord’s supper in place of the Passover. The fourth thing misliked is that against the Apostle’s prohibition^b to have any familiarity at all with notorious offenders: papists, being not of the Church, are admitted to our very communion before they have by their religious and gospel-like behaviour purged themselves of that suspicion of popery which their former life hath caused. They are dogs, swine, unclean beasts, foreigners, and strangers from the Church of God, and therefore ought not to be admitted, though they offer *themselves*. We are fifthly condemned, inasmuch as,

^a 2 Chron. xxxv. 6

^b 1 Cor. v. 11.

when there have been store of people to hear sermon and service in the church, we suffer the communion to be ministered to a few. It is not enough that our book of common prayer hath godly exhortations to move all thereunto which are present; for it should not suffer a few to communicate, it should by ecclesiastical discipline and civil punishment provide that such as would withdraw themselves might be brought to communicate, according both to the law of God and the ancient church canons.^a In the sixth and last place cometh the enormity of imparting this sacrament privately unto the sick.”

Thus far accused, we answer briefly to the first; ^b that, seeing God by sacraments doth apply in particular unto every man's person the grace which himself hath provided for the benefit of all mankind, there is no cause why, administering the sacraments, we should forbear to express that in our forms of speech, which he by his word and gospel teacheth all to believe. In the true sacrament, “I baptize thee” displeaseth them not. If “Eat thou” in the other offend them, their fancies are no rules for churches to follow.

Whether Christ at his last supper did speak generally once to all, or to every one in particular, is a thing uncertain. His words are recorded in that form which

^a Numb. ix. 13.; Can. ix. Apost. Concil. 2. Brac. cap. 83.

^b T. C. lib. i. p. 166. “Besides that it is good to leave the popish form in those things which we may so conveniently do, it is best to come as near the manner of celebration of the supper which our Saviour Christ used as may be. And if it be a good argument to prove that therefore we must rather say *Take thou* than *Take ye*, because the sacrament is an application of the benefits of Christ, it behoveth that the preacher should *direct his admonitions* particularly one after another unto all those which *hear his sermon, which is a thing absurd.*”

serveth best for the setting down with historical brevity, what was spoken, they are no manifest proof that he spake but once unto all which did then communicate, much less that we in speaking unto every communicant severally do amiss, although it were clear that we herein do otherwise than Christ did. Our imitation of him consisteth not in tying scrupulously ourselves unto his syllables, but rather in speaking by the heavenly direction of that inspired divine wisdom which teacheth divers ways to one end, and doth therein control their boldness by whom any profitable way is censured as reprobable only under colour of some small difference from great examples going before. To do, throughout, every the like circumstance the same which Christ did in this action, were, by following his footsteps in that sort, to err more from the purpose he aimed at than we now do by not following them with so nice and severe strictness.

They little weigh with themselves how dull, how heavy, and almost how without sense the greatest part of the common multitude every where is, who think it either unmeet or unnecessary to put them, even man by man, especially at that time, in mind whereabout they are. It is true that in sermons we do not use to repeat our sentences severally to every particular hearer, — a strange madness it were if we should. The softness of wax may induce a wise man to set his stamp or image therein; it persuadeth no man that because wool hath the like quality, it may therefore receive the like impression. So the reason taken from the use of sacraments, in that they are instruments of grace unto every

particular man, may with good congruity lead the Church to frame accordingly her words in administration of sacraments, because they easily admit this form, which being in sermons a thing impossible without apparent ridiculous absurdity, agreement of sacraments with sermons in that which is alleged as a reasonable proof of conveniency for the one proveth not the same allegation impertinent because it doth not enforce the other to be administered in like sort. For equal principles do then avail unto equal conclusions when the matter whereunto we apply them is equal, and not else.

Our kneeling at communions is the gesture of piety.* If we did there present ourselves but to make some show or dumb resemblance of a spiritual feast, it may be that sitting were the fitter ceremony; but, coming as receivers of inestimable grace at the hands of God, what doth better beseem our bodies at that hour than to be sensible witnesses of minds unfeignedly humbled? Our Lord himself did that which custom and long usage had made fit; we, that which fitness and great decency hath made usual.

The trial of ourselves before we eat of this bread and drink of this cup is by express commandment every man's precise duty. As for necessity of calling others unto account besides ourselves, albeit we be not thereunto drawn by any great strength which is in their arguments, who first press us with it as a thing neces-

* T. C. lib. i. p. 165. "Kneeling carrieth a show of worship, sitting agreeth better with the action of the supper. Christ and his Apostles kneeled not."

sary, by affirming that the Apostles did use it^a, and then prove the Apostles to have used it by affirming it to be necessary; again, albeit we greatly muse how they can avouch that God did command the Levites to prepare their brethren against the feast of the Passover, and that the examination of them was a part of their preparation, when the place alleged to this purpose doth but charge the Levites saying, “Make ready *laah-hechem*, for your brethren,” to the end they may do according to the word of the Lord by Moses; wherefore in the selfsame place it followeth how lambs and kids and sheep and bullocks were delivered unto the Levites, and that thus “the service was made ready;” it followeth likewise how the Levites having in such sort provided for the people, they made provision for “themselves and for the priests the sons of Aaron;” so that confidently from hence to conclude the necessity of examination, argueth their wonderful great forwardness in framing all things to serve their turn. Nevertheless, the examination of communicants, when need requireth, for the profitable use it may have in such cases, we reject not.

Our fault in admitting popish communicants, is it in that we are forbidden^b to eat, and therefore much more to communicate, with notorious malefactors? The

^a T. C. lib. i. p. 164. All things necessary were used in the churches of God in the Apostles' times; but examination was a necessary thing, therefore used. “In the Book of Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxv. 6.) the Levites were commanded to prepare the people to the receiving of the Passover, in place whereof we have the Lord's supper. Now, examination being a part of the preparation, it followeth that here is commandment of the examination.”

^b 1 Cor. v. 11.; T. C. lib. i. p. 167.

name of a papist is not given unto any man for being a notorious malefactor. And the crime wherewith we are charged is suffering of papists to communicate; so that, be their life and conversation whatsoever in the sight of men, their popish opinions are in this case laid as bars and exceptions against them, yea, those opinions which they have held in former times, although they now both profess by word and offer to show by fact the contrary.* All this doth not justify us, which ought not, they say, to admit them in any wise, till their gospel-like behaviour have removed all suspicion of popery from them, because papists are “dogs, swine, beasts, foreigners and strangers” from the house of God; in a word, they are “not of the Church.”

What the terms of “gospel-like behaviour” may include is obscure and doubtful. But of the visible Church of Christ in this present world, from which they separate all papists, we are thus persuaded. Church is a word which art hath devised thereby to sever and distinguish that society of men which professeth the true religion from the rest which profess it not. There have been in the world from the very first foundation thereof but three religions: Paganism, which lived in the blindness of corrupt and depraved nature; Judaism, embracing the Law, which reformed heathenish impiety, and taught salvation to be looked for through one whom God in the last days would send

* T. C. lib. i. p. 167. “Although they would receive the communion, yet they ought to be kept back until such time as by their religious and gospel-like behaviour they have purged themselves of that suspicion of popery which their former life and conversation hath caused to be conceived.”

and exalt to be Lord of all; finally, Christian belief, which yieldeth obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and acknowledgeth him the Saviour whom God did promise. Seeing, then, that the Church is a name which art hath given to professors of true religion; as they which will define a man are to pass by those qualities wherein one man doth excel another, and to take only those essential properties whereby a man doth differ from creatures of other kinds; so, he that will teach what the Church is, shall never rightly perform the work whereabout he goeth, till in matter of religion he touch that difference which severeth the Church's religion from theirs who are not the Church. Religion being, therefore, a matter partly of contemplation, partly of action, we must define the Church, which is a religious society, by such differences as do properly explain the essence of such things; that is to say, by the object or matter whereabout the contemplations and actions of the Church are properly conversant. For so all knowledges and all virtues are defined. Whereupon, because the only object which separateth ours from other religions is Jesus Christ, in whom none but the Church doth believe, and whom none but the Church doth worship, we find that accordingly the Apostles do every where distinguish hereby the Church from infidels and from Jews, accounting "them which call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" to be his Church.

If we go lower, we shall but add unto this certain casual and variable accidents, which are not properly of the being, but make only for the happier and better

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 the seals of eternal life, in derision.

Now the privilege of the visible Church of God
 of that we speak) is to be herein like the ark of
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 it are lost sheep; yet in this was the ark of Noa
 viled above the Church, that whereas none c

^a Rom. xv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 10.

which were in the one could perish, numbers in the other are cast away, because, to eternal life, our profession is not enough. Many things exclude from the kingdom of God, although from the Church they separate not.

In the Church there arise sundry grievous storms, by means whereof whole kingdoms and nations professing Christ both have been heretofore and are at this present day divided about Christ. During which divisions and contentions amongst men albeit each part do justify itself, yet the one of necessity must needs err if there be any contradiction between them, be it great or little; and what side soever it be that hath the truth, the same we must also acknowledge alone to hold with the true Church in that point, and consequently reject the other as an enemy in that case fallen away from the true Church.

Wherefore of hypocrites and dissemblers^a, whose profession at the first was but only from the teeth outward, when they afterwards took occasion to oppugn certain principal articles of faith, the Apostles which defended the truth against them pronounced them "gone out" from the fellowship of sound and sincere believers, when as yet the Christian religion they had not utterly cast off.

In like sense and meaning throughout all ages heretics have justly been hated as branches cut off from the body of the true Vine, yet only so far forth cut off as their heresies have extended. Both heresy and many *other crimes* which wholly sever from God, do sever

^a 1 John, ii. 19.

from the Church of God in part only. “The mystery of piety,” saith the Apostle, “is without peradventure great, God hath been manifested in the flesh, hath been justified in the Spirit, hath been seen of angels, hath been preached to nations, hath been believed on in the world, hath been taken up into glory.”^a The Church a pillar and foundation of this truth, which no where is known or professed but only within the Church, and they all of the Church that profess it. In the meanwhile it cannot be denied that many profess this who are not therefore cleared simply from all either faults or errors which make separation between us and the wellspring of our happiness. Idolatry severed of old the Israelites, iniquity those scribes and Pharisees from God, who notwithstanding were a part of the seed of Abraham — a part of that very seed which God did himself acknowledge to be his Church. The Church of God may therefore contain both them which indeed are not his, yet must be reputed his by us that know not their inward thoughts, and them whose apparent wickedness testifieth, even in the sight of the whole world, that God abhorreth them. For to this and no other purpose are meant those parables which our Saviour in the Gospel hath concerning mixture of vice with virtue, light with darkness, truth with error, as well an openly known and seen as a cunningly cloaked mixture.

That which separateth therefore utterly, that which putteth off clean from the visible Church of Christ, is plain apostacy, direct denial, utter rejection of the whole

^a 1 Tim. iii. 16,

Christian faith, as far as the same is professedly different from infidelity. Heretics, as touching those points of doctrine wherein they fail; schismatics, as touching the quarrels for which, or the duties wherein, they divide themselves from their brethren; loose, licentious, and wicked persons, as touching their several offences or crimes, have all forsaken the true Church of God, the Church which is sound and sincere in the doctrine that they corrupt, the Church that keepeth the bond of unity which they violate, the Church that walketh in the laws of righteousness which they transgress; this very true Church of Christ they have left, howbeit not altogether left nor forsaken simply the Church, upon the main foundations whereof they continue built, notwithstanding these breaches whereby they are rent at the top asunder.

Now, because for redress of professed errors and open schisms it is and must be the Church's care that all may in outward conformity be one, as the laudable polity of former ages, even so our own to that end and purpose hath established divers laws, the moderate severity whereof is a mean both to stay the rest and to reclaim such as heretofore have been led awry. But seeing that the offices which laws require are always definite, and when that they require is done they go no farther, whereupon sundry ill-affected persons, to save themselves from danger of laws, pretend obedience, albeit inwardly they carry still the same hearts which they did before, by means whereof it falleth out that *receiving unworthily the blessed sacrament at our hands, they eat and drink their own damnation; it is*

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for remedy of this mischief here determined^a, to whom the law of the realm doth punish unless they communicate, such, if they offer to obey law, the Church notwithstanding should not admit without probation before had of their gospel-like behaviour.

Wherein they first set no time how long this supposed probation must continue; again they nominate no certain judgment the verdict whereof shall approve men's behaviour to be gospel-like; and that which is most material, whereas they seek to make it more hard for dissemblers to be received into the Church than

^a T. C. lib. i. p. 167. "If the place of the fifth to the Corinthians forbid that we should have any familiarity with notorious offenders, doth much more forbid that they should be received to the communion. And therefore papists, being such as which are notoriously known to hold heretical opinions, ought not to be admitted, much less compelled to supper. For seeing that our Saviour Christ did institute his supper amongst his disciples, and those only which were, as St. Paul speaks within, it is evident that the papists, being without, and foreigners, strangers from the Church of God, ought not to be received if they offer themselves: and that minister that shall give the supper of the Lord to him which is known to be a papist, and which hath never any clear renouncing of popery with which he hath been defiled, doth profane the table of the Lord, and doth give the meat that is prepared for the children unto dogs, and he bringeth into the pasture which is provided for the sheep, swine and unclean beasts, contrary to the faith and trust that ought to be in a steward of the Lord's house, as he is. I am albeit that I doubt not but many of those which are now papists profess to the election of God, which God also in his good time will call to the knowledge of his truth; yet, notwithstanding, they ought to be uncommunicated from the minister and unto the Church, touching the ministering of sacraments unto strangers and as unclean beasts. . . . The ministering of the sacraments unto them is a declaration and seal of God's favour and reconciliation with them, and a plain preaching partly that they be justified already from their sins, partly that they are of the household of God, such as the Lord will feed to eternal life, which is not lawful to be ministered unto those which are not of the household of faith. And therefore to conclude that the compelling of papists unto the communion, and dismissing and letting of them go, when as they be to be punished for their stubbornness in popery (with this condition, if they will receive communion), is very unlawful, when as, although they would receive, yet they ought to be kept back till such time as by their reformation they have gospel-like behaviour," &c.

and polity as yet hath done, they make it in truth more easy for such kind of persons to wind themselves out of the law and to continue the same they were. The law requireth at their hands that duty which in conscience doth touch them nearest, because the greatest difference between us and them is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, whose name in the service of our communion we celebrate with due honour, which they in the error of their mass profane. As, therefore, on our part to hear mass were an open departure from that sincere profession wherein we stand; so, if they on the other side receive our communion, they give us the strongest pledge of fidelity that man can demand. What their hearts are God doth know. But if they which mind treachery to God and man shall once apprehend this advantage given them, whereby they may satisfy law in pretending themselves conformable (for what can law with reason or justice require more?), and yet be sure the Church will accept no such offer, till their gospel-like behaviour be allowed; after that our own simplicity hath once thus fairly eased them from sting of law, it is to be thought they will learn the mystery of gospel-like behaviour when leisure serveth them. And so, while without any cause we fear to profane sacraments, we shall not only defeat the purpose of most wholesome laws, but lose or wilfully hazard those souls from which the likeliest means of full and perfect recovery are by our indiscretion withheld.

For neither doth God thus bind us to dive into men's consciences, nor can their fraud and deceit hurt any

man but themselves. To him they seem such as they are; but to us they must be taken for such as they seem. In the eye of God, they are against Christ that are not truly and sincerely with him; in our eyes, they must be received as "with Christ," that are not to outward show "against him."

The case of impenitent and notorious sinners is not like unto theirs whose only imperfection is error severed from pertinacy; error in appearance content to submit itself to better instruction; error so far already cured as to crave at our hands that sacrament the hatred and utter refusal whereof was the weightiest point wherein, heretofore, they swerved and went astray.

In this case, therefore, they cannot reasonably charge us with remiss dealing, or with carelessness to whom we impart the mysteries of Christ; but they have given us manifest occasion to think it requisite that we earnestly advise rather and exhort them to consider as they ought their sundry oversights, first in equalling undistinctly crimes with errors, as touching force to make incapable of this sacrament: secondly, in suffering indignation at the faults of the Church of Rome to blind and withhold their judgments from seeing that which withal they should acknowledge, concerning so much nevertheless still due to the same Church, as to be held and reputed a part of the house of God, a limb of the visible Church of Christ: thirdly, in imposing upon the Church a burden to enter farther into men's hearts, and to make a deeper search of their consciences, than any law of God or reason of man enforceth: fourthly, and lastly, in repelling, under colour of longer trial,

such from the mysteries of heavenly grace, as are both capable thereof by the laws of God, for any thing we hear to the contrary, and should in divers considerations be cherished according to the merciful examples and precepts whereby the Gospel of Christ hath taught us towards such to show compassion, to receive them with lenity and all meekness, if any thing be shaken in them to strengthen it, not to quench with delays and jealousies that feeble smoke of conformity which seemeth to breathe from them, but to build wheresoever there is any foundation, to add perfection unto slender beginnings, and that, as by other offices of piety, even so by this very food of life which Christ hath left in his Church, not only for preservation of strength, but also for relief of weakness.

But to return to our own selves, in whom the next thing severely reprov'd is the paucity^a of communicants: if they require at communions frequency, we wish the same, knowing how acceptable unto God such service is when multitudes cheerfully concur unto it^b: if they encourage men thereunto, we also (themselves acknowledge it) are not utterly forgetful to do the like; if they require some public coaction for remedy of that wherein, by milder and softer means, little good is done, they know our laws and statutes provided in that behalf, whereunto whatsoever convenient help may be added more by the wisdom of man, what cause have we given the world to think that we are not ready to hearken to it, and to use any good mean of sweet compulsion^c to have this high and heavenly banquet largely

^a *T. C. lib. i. p. 147.*
^c *Luke, xiv. 23.*

^b 2 Chron. xxx. 13. Psalm cxxii. 1.

furnished ? Only we cannot so far yield as to judge it convenient that the holy desire of a competent number should be unsatisfied, because the greater part is careless and undispensed to join with them.

Men should not (they say) be permitted, a few by themselves, to communicate, when so many are gone away, because this sacrament is a token of our conjunction with our brethren ; and therefore, by communicating apart from them, we make an apparent show of distraction. I ask, then, on which side unity is broken ? whether on theirs that depart, or on theirs who, being left behind, do communicate ? First, in the one it is not denied but that they may have reasonable causes of departure, and that then even they are delivered from just blame. Of such kind of causes two are allowed : namely, danger of impairing health, and necessary business requiring our presence elsewhere. And may not a third cause, which is unfitness at the present time, detain us as lawfully back as either of these two ? True it is, that we cannot hereby altogether excuse ourselves ; for that we ought to prevent this, and do not. But if we have committed a fault in not preparing our minds before, shall we therefore aggravate the same with a worse, the crime of unworthy participation ? He that abstaineth doth want, for the time, that grace and comfort which religious communicants have ; but he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, receiveth death : that which is life to others turneth in him to poison.

Notwithstanding, whatsoever be the cause for which men abstain, were it reason that the fault of one part

should any way abridge their benefit that are not faulty? There is in all the Scripture of God no one syllable which doth condemn communicating amongst a few when the rest are departed from them.

As for the last thing, which is our imparting this sacrament privately unto the sick; whereas there have been of old (they grant) two kinds of necessity wherein this sacrament might be privately administered^a; of which two the one being erroneously imagined, and the other (they say) continuing no longer in use, there remaineth unto us no necessity at all, for which that custom should be retained. The falsely surmised necessity is that whereby some have thought all such excluded from possibility of salvation as did depart this life and never were made partakers of the holy Eucharist. The other cause of necessity was, when men, which had fallen in time of persecution, and had afterwards repented them, but were not as yet received again unto the fellowship of this communion, did at the hour of their death request it, that so they might rest with greater quietness and comfort of mind, being thereby assured of departure in unity of Christ's Church, which virtuous desire the fathers did think it great impiety not to satisfy. This was Serapion's case of necessity. Serapion, a faithful aged person, and always of very upright life, till fear of persecution in the end caused him to shrink back, after long sorrow for his scandalous offence, and suit oftentimes made to be *pardoned of the Church*, fell at length into grievous *sickness*, and being ready to yield up the ghost, was

^a T. C. i. 146.

then more instant than ever before to receive the sacrament. Which sacrament was necessary in this case: not that Serapion had been deprived of everlasting life without it, but that his end was thereby to him made the more comfortable. And do we think that all cases of such necessity are clean vanished? Suppose that some have by mispersuasion lived in schism, withdrawn themselves from holy and public assemblies, hated the prayers and loathed the sacraments of the Church, falsely presuming them to be fraught with impious and anti-christian corruptions; which error the God of mercy and truth opening at the length their eyes to see, they do not only repent them of the evil which they have done, but also, in token thereof, desire to receive comfort by that whereunto they have offered disgrace (which may be the case of many poor seduced souls even at this day), God forbid we should think that the Church doth sin in permitting the wounds of such to be suppled with that oil which this gracious sacrament doth yield, and their bruised minds not only need but beg.

There is nothing which the soul of man doth desire in that last hour so much as comfort against the natural terrors of death, and other scruples of conscience which commonly do then most trouble and perplex the weak, towards whom the very law of God doth exact at our hands all the helps that Christian lenity and indulgence can afford. Our general consolation departing this life is the hope of that glorious and blessed resurrection^a which the Apostle St. Paul^b nameth,

^a 1 Cor. xv. 21.

^b Phil. iii. 11.

ἀνάστασιν^a, to note that, as all men shall have their *ἀνάστασιν*, and be raised again from the dead, so the just shall be taken up and exalted above the rest, whom the power of God doth but raise, and not exalt. This life and this resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is for all men, as touching the sufficiency of that he hath done; but that which maketh us partakers thereof is our particular communion with Christ, and this sacrament a principal mean as well to strengthen the bond as to multiply in us the fruits of the same communion; for which cause St. Cyprian^b termeth it a joyful solemnity of expedite and speedy resurrection; Ignatius^c, a medicine which procureth immortality and preventeth death; Irenæus^d, the nourishment of our bodies to eternal life, and their preservative from corruption. Now because that sacrament, which at all times we may receive unto this effect, is then most acceptable and most fruitful, when any special extraordinary occasion, nearly and presently urging, kindleth our desires towards it. their severity, who cleave unto that alone which is generally fit to be done, and so make all men's condition alike, may add much affliction to divers troubled and grieved minds^e, of whose particular estate particular not being had, according to the charitable order of church wherein we live, there ensueth unto God

ὅτι ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐπαρσιν. Theophyl. Πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀνίστανται καὶ πιστοὶ ἀξιούνται τῶν ἀγαθῶν. Ammon. Vide 1 Thess.

"resurrectionis lætabunda solemnia." Cypr. de Carn.

καὶ ἀντίδοτον μὴ θανεῖν. Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. 34.

mutandum est ex solemnibus, tamen ubi æquitas mutandum est." Lib. clxxxiii. ff. de Reg. Jur.

men that glory which his righteous saints comforted in their greatest distresses do yield; and unto them which have their reasonable petitions satisfied, the same contentment, tranquillity, and joy, that others before them, by means of like satisfaction, have reaped, and wherein we are all, or should be, desirous finally to take our leave of the world, whensoever our own uncertain time of most assured departure shall come.

Concerning, therefore, both prayers and sacraments together with our usual and received form of administering the same in the Church of England, let this much suffice.

WHAT COMFORTS FLOW FROM THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

[JOHN HACKET, D.D.]

BUT as if many spouts should open into one cistern, so all comforts conspire to meet in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Nothing else but the actual enjoying of heaven is above it. . The Church, which dispenseth all the mysteries of salvation, can bring forth no better. Children that are come to age can ask no more than the whole portion of their father's goods that come unto them; and what is that but the blood of Christ? and this is the new testament in that blood. Christ is mine, his body is mine, his blood is mine, all is mine! "Oh be glad and rejoice, and give honour to the Lord God omnipotent, for the marriage of the Lamb is come."^a And the Spirit saith, "Write, Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."^b It is much to be received into the covenant with God by the former sacrament: is it not more to be kept in covenant by the other? It is much in baptism to be brought from death to life: but what is life without nourishment to preserve it? This keeps us in

^a *Rev. xix. 7.*

^b *Ver. 9.*

the lease of the old covenant, that the years of it shall never run out and expire.

This is food to keep us in health and strength, that we never decay and faint. By it we lay hold of the promise, "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."^a Then why should I not embolden my heart with holy security against all fears; for the Lord hath put himself into my hand, and into my mouth, and into my spirit: of what then should I be afraid? This is that courage which our liturgy sounds forth, as with a shrill trumpet, to all that come to this banquet well prepared. It begins, that "it is a comfortable thing to all them that receive it worthily;" it bids us "come with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience;" it proclaims aloud, "Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly come unto him: 'So God loved the world,' &c. 'This is a true saying,'" &c. It hath gathered the sallies of spiritual joy, as it were, into a bundle of myrrh. It adds, "Christ hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort." And if all this put together will not blandish our conscience, and stablish our joy, we would be dull and spirit-broken, though an angel from heaven should come and say unto us, as he did unto Gideon, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."^b For an angel of the Lord cannot plead so much to the solace of the heart as the great

^a *Isaiah, liv. 10.*

^b *Judg. vi. 12.*

Angel of the Covenant hath done in these great demonstrations of love as followeth.

1. First; as baptism was the former, so this is the second, visible publication of God's apparent mercy. It is not a bare message, but a lively apprehension of them by palpable means; not in a vision or a dream, but in a real object. Call to mind that the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice.^a Once the Lord hath appeared unto us in the token of his love by water; and once again he appears unto us in the elements of his holy table. Twice he hath appeared to bless thee. Therefore, "eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart."^b For if you turn away from comfort when the Lord hath appeared twice unto you to give it you, he will be angry, and leave you to a thick darkness of sorrow, such as fell upon the land of Egypt.

2. Secondly; the Lord can appear comfortably unto us, though with a sword in his hand, and in the midst of a camp, as he did to Joshua^c; or in a flame of fire, as he did to Manoah^d; or in a tempest upon the sea, as he did to the Apostles^e; or at the grave's mouth, as he did to Mary Magdalen.^f But here he appears unto us in a feast, which is a time of innocent delight. The glory of God, which we look for, is set forth unto us in that which our senses apprehend for sweetness and pleasure; as, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom^g:"

^a 1 Kings, xi. 39.

^b Eccles. ix. 7.

^c Josh. v. 13.

^d Judg. xiii. 20.

^e Matt. xiv. 27.

^f John, xi. 14.

^g Luke, xxii. 29.

which is translated from bodily pleasure to spiritual, that in the heaven of blessedness the soul shall feed continually as at a banquet, of which we have now a taste in the kingly provision of Christ's supper. It is a kingly feast, although imparted in a little pittance of bread and wine; yet it is more costly and precious in that which it signifies than Solomon and all his court had for their diet day by day.^a We are brought to eat at the king's table, as Mephibosheth was, like one of the king's sons.^b To eat together is a communion of more than ordinary acquaintance. Do you note the endearing favour of God in that? And what are we, that are not thrust, as our kind might look for it, to gather up crumbs under the board, but to eat our portion before the Lord, with the Lord, out of the hands of the Lord? For he that brake bread, and gave it to the Apostles, gives it to us, as our High Priest, though he be in heaven. I exhort you, therefore, to enter into the guest-chamber with a quiet and unshaken heart: for the Lord hath not invited us as Absalom did Amnon, to kill us, nor as Esther did Haman, to accuse us; but as Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, to bless us. He gives us Asher's portion; bread that shall be fat, and royal dainties.^c Only the case is altered if Christ shall say, "The hand of him that betrays me, the hand of him that loves me not, the hand of him that believes not in me, the hand of him that will not keep my sayings, is on the table;" that wretch shall be thrown out, and be fed with bread of sorrow

^a *Kings, iv. 22.*^b *2 Sam. ix. 11.*^c *Gen. xlix.*

and water of affliction ; nay, where there shall not be a drop of water to cool his tongue.

3. Thirdly ; that which astonisheth the communicant and ravisheth his heart is, that this feast affords no worse meat than the body and blood of our Saviour. Those he gave for the life of the world ; these are the repast of this supper, and these we truly partake. For there is not only the visible reception of the outward signs, but an invisible reception of the thing signified. There is far more than a shadow, than a type, than a figure. Christ did not only propose a sign at that hour, but also he gave us a gift, and that gift, really and effectually, is himself, which is all one, as you would say, spiritually himself ; for spiritual union is the most true and real union that can be. That which is promised and faith takes it, and hath it, is not fiction, fancy, opinion, falsity, but substance and verity. Being strengthened with power, by the Spirit, in the inward mind, Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith.^a As by a ring, or a meaner instrument of conveyance, a man may be settled in land, or put into an office ; and by such conveyances the ratification of such grants are held to be real ; how much more real is the gift and receipt of Christ's body and blood when conveyed unto us by the confirmation of the eternal Spirit ! For observe, it is the same Spirit that is in Christ and that is in us, and we are quickened by one and the same Spirit.^b Therefore it cannot choose but that a real union must follow between Christ and us, as there is a union between all the parts of the body by the animation of one soul.

^a Ephes. iii. 17.

^b Rom. viii. 11.

But faith is the mouth wherewith we eat his body and drink his blood ; not the mouth of a man, but of a faithful man ; for we hunger after him, not with a corporeal appetite, but a spiritual ; therefore our eating must be spiritual, and not corporeal. Yet this is a real, a substantial partaking of Christ crucified, broken, his flesh bleeding, his wounds gaping ; so he is exhibited, so we are sure we receive him, which doth not only touch our outward senses in the elements, but pass through into the depth of the soul. For in true divinity, real and spiritual are equipollent ; although with the papists nothing is real unless it be corporeal ; which is a gross way to defraud us of the sublime and soul-ravishing virtue of the mystery ; “ a mystery neither to be set out in words, nor to be comprehended sufficiently in the mind, but to be adored with faith,” says Calvin.^a But herein we pledge Christ in the cup of love ; herein we renew the covenant of forgiveness strongly assured by the sprinkling of blood : the life is in the blood ; and, without shedding of blood is no remission of sins, because death is the wages of sin. Sin is the greatest dishonour that can be done to God ; and death in Christ's person is the greatest satisfaction that can be made. He died, and gave himself for me ; he died, and gave himself to me, as he was dead in his gored and pierced body, that his sacrifice might be in me, and in all those that are redeemed by it. We read of some mothers that, in a great famine, have eaten their own children^b ; but what mother, in the time of famine, did ever give her own flesh to save the life of her child ?

^a Lib. Instit. c. 17. sect. 5.^b 2 Kings, vi.

But Christ hath given himself for us, that we might not perish. “O Lord, I owe all my life to thee, because thou hast laid down thy life for me. Oh let me bleed out my sins, that thy blood may fill all the veins of my spirit. Oh let my body be transfigured to the heavenly by cleanliness and chastity, by being used only for thy worship and service, that the body of my Saviour may come under the roof of it. Then, when the King shall set forth his table, and give himself to me in his wonderful feast, my spikenard shall send forth a sweet smell^a; my soul shall magnify the Lord, and my spirit shall rejoice in Christ my Saviour.”

“We have found the Messias,” says Philip to Nathanael; and where have we found him? At a feast: a feast of his own body and blood, but set out with no more cost and show than a piece of bread and a sip of wine. In this manner it is brought to pass by the omnipotency of God’s pleasure to institute it, with the efficacy of a strong faith concurring to receive it. The Church had done very ill, if, of its own head, it had made so mean a representation of Christ; but the Lord must be obeyed, and ought to be admired in the humility of his ordinance, who hath not given us rich viands and full cups, but made the feast out of the fragments of the meanest creatures. Let them that will make themselves fit to be his guests bring a preparation of humility suitable to the exility of those oblations. “The meek shall eat and be satisfied, they shall praise the Lord, and seek him^b,” and at that season let the riotous remember his fulness of bread, and

^a Cant. i. 12.

^b Psalm xxii. 26.

excess of wine. God is honoured in a little, and his liberality is abused in the excess of his creatures. And it is worth the noting, that the elements which we are invited to take are of fruits that grow out of the earth, to show that the earth, which was cursed for Adam's sake, is blessed for Christ's sake. As it brings forth thorns and thistles, to call to mind our rebellion; so it brings forth bread and wine, to call to mind our redemption. Neither doth God supply us with bread only out of the furrows of the earth, but sometime it hath fallen out of the clouds of heaven. "Behold," says God, "I will rain bread from heaven for you."^a This was manna, called "the corn of heaven."^b This was the spiritual meat, or angels' food, in which the old believers in the wilderness did eat Christ with an implicit faith. Our outward sign is the bread of the earth, true bread that grows in the fields; yet the bread signified is that which the "Father hath given us from heaven."^c Bread is a great part of man's nourishment; so Christ crucified is the sole refection of faith. Bread is champ'd in the mouth to make it fit for the stomach; so the body of Christ was ordained to be slain before it could profit us. "If the corn of wheat fall not into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."^d By his life we learn to live, and by his death we are made alive. Bread, when it is ground between our teeth and eaten, is turned by concoction into the substance of our body, which explains our mystical union with Christ, that we are made one spirit

^a Exod. xvi. 4.^c John, vi. 31.^b Psalm lxxviii. 24.^d John, xii. 24.

with him by faith, as this sensible food is converted into our flesh and bone.

Beside, in the several parts of the outward signs, it is God's meaning we should conceive how he loves the gathering together of many into one, which is thus to be qualified. At a common supper, or any meal, all that are at the board feed of the same meats; yet every one feeds to himself, and to none beside; so every communicant eats Christ to himself, and the just shall live by his own faith. Nevertheless, it is a sacrament to combine and to knit together, holding us fast into one communion, that there may be no breaking asunder of the parts and members. Many grains of wheat are kneaded into one loaf; many grapes are trodden that their liquor may be pressed into one cup. "We, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."^a Now, natural learning will teach us what a comfort there is in union, and that factions and dissolutions are painful and grievous. Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is! behold, what a strengthening to the mystical body, to continue in one fellowship and breaking of bread, to link faith and love together in Jesus Christ! It was but one deliverance common to all Israel, whose solemnity was kept at the Passover, though every lamb was eaten by itself in a several family. So it is one cup of salvation which God hath given us to drink, though distributed to the faithful according to the multitude of persons; and it is one bread of which we do all eat, though some have one *share of it and some another*. It is necessary that many

^a 1 Cor. x. 17.

pieces be broken off from one loaf, to typify the body of the Lord broken for us, and that the benefits of his passion are distributed among us.

There are many instances that are pregnant to prove how pieces of something, broken and divided into many shares, do import a communication of somewhat among the dividers. The heathen, at the making of a league, did now and then break a flint stone into pieces; and they that entered into a league kept the parts in token of a covenant. Some, upon a contract of marriage, will break a piece of gold, and the two halves are reserved by the contractors. Shall I go further, and yet come nearest to our case? The Roman soldiers parted our Saviour's garments among them, and in that symbolical accident is shown that the Gentiles should share in the satisfaction of his death. So Peter takes this morsel of bread, John another, &c.; yet Christ is not divided. The same ticket, as it were, in words, in substance, is put into every hand, on which is written, "Take and eat it in remembrance of me."

"Take it," says Christ, and be not afraid, as Saul was, to take a kingdom, since Christ hath appointed it: be not afraid, as David was, to be a king's son, since such honour is predestinated to thee. Take it, and fear not, as Peter did, saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man;" it is the Lord's delight "to seek and to save that which is lost." Take it, and take heed you let not go your hold; the thing is fast and firm, if you do not let it go and lose it. Take it, but not to hold the pleasures of the world and your sinful lusts in your gripe together:

if your hands be full of these things, you can never hold this. Take it, and take Christ with it; for he that made the testament in his blood hath set the seal unto the testament, which gives you interest and possession of the redemption by his blood. Take it, and reach out your hand, to signify that you receive Christ with the hand of faith. They are too nice, for fear of I know not what, in the Roman Church, of losing a crumb, or so forth, that they put the body of Christ into the mouth of their disciples, and in pretence that they give it as a mother doth her breast into the mouth of her child; whereas we receive this sacrament, not as babes, but as those that are grown to the measure of a good age. And if we be not worthy to take it into our hands, we are not worthy to receive it in our mouths. Take it, and eat it; for it is not enough to be sprinkled without, but to feed on Christ, and to digest him within. If, upon the supply of corn, and beasts, and cattle, Paul might say, that "God hath filled our hearts with food and gladness^a;" if we are glad of that which sustains us for a time, and yet we must die; how glad will we be to eat of that as will give us such a life that will endure for ever! "Eat of the forbidden tree," says the serpent to Eve, "and you shall not die;" but he lied unto her. Therefore, to dissolve the works of the devil, our Saviour hath appointed that which we shall eat, and assured the promise of everlasting life unto it. Eat, as Jonathan did of the honeycomb, that you may be lusty to pursue your enemies; and though Satan has sworn your death, as Saul did Jonathan's^b, the Lord will de-

^a Acts, xiv. 17.

^b 1 Sam. xiv. 44.

liver you. Pine not away with the consumption of an evil conscience; but eat, and be strong in the Lord, and in his mercy; as the spirit of the Egyptian, who was half dead, came to him again, when he had eaten a little.^a Eat, and grind the bread between your teeth, to show the Lord's death. For Christ could have said, "This is my body *slain*; this is my body *crucified*;" but he had rather say, "This is my body *broken* for you;" to show the great injuries of his sufferings. Eat, then, and remember you eat the body as it was broken; and remember that you drink the blood as it flowed out of his wounds.

To keep these things in remembrance is the great design of the sacrament; an object which keeps the fancy of the soul waking, that otherwise, it may be, would fall asleep. In the sixth of St. John, Christ preacheth over and over of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, without a sacrament, by the power of faith. But to keep it in fresh and frequent meditation, the Lord hath given us a palpable and signal token, as if he would engrave it upon the palms of our hands, and upon the roofs of our mouths, upon the membranes of our brain, and upon the foreskin of our heart. This is a blessing twice and twenty times given, because it is given that it may never be forgotten. They that love others would live in the memory of those they love: it is because Christ loves us entirely, that he would be remembered of us. And no friend will say to another, "Remember me when I am gone," but that he means reciprocally to remember his friend, to whom he spake

^a 1 Sam. xxx. 12.

it. If you will remember Christ, he will remember you. And the thief on the cross will teach you that it is good to continue in his memory: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." O blessed Christ! thou art good, and dost good: thou hast not only provided an invaluable benefit for thy Church, but dost put it into our hands that we may not lose it; and dost bring it into our eyes by clear ostension, that we may not forget it. We are apt to remember injuries and to forget benefits; unthankfulness will undo us, if we take not heed of it. Oh, rub over your memory, and consider the noble works of the Lord, especially this great work, how he suffered for us unto death. Remember seriously this one thing as you ought, and God will let you forget nothing that will do you good. There is no grievous sin which we incur, but for the present Christ is forgotten, as if he had never come to charge us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. But look upon his wounds which bleed for our transgressions, and it will stanch the flux of sin, and make our hearts bleed, because we have forgotten obedience. In our distresses, our sickness, and losses, we cry out that God hath forgotten us; he hath forgotten to be gracious, and shuts up his loving-kindness in displeasure. But distrust him not: a mother cannot forget her child, much less such a father. Every tribulation which he inflicts is but a thorn in our sides to prick us and awake us, because we have forgotten God.

And remember the death of Christ, not only casting your eyes back to the large histories of it in the Gospels, as if that would suffice; but affectedly, practically,

zealously ; and then every thing else will come to mind to perfect holiness. When we remember his death, we are sure he is past death, and risen again, now to die no more, and that he is ascended into heaven, and makes intercession for us. We have obtained that faith that we partake in the new testament of his blood, and that, our names being found in the testament, we are heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ. The custom of the world will teach us that an heir is bound to execute the will of the testator, to see every thing performed that he hath charged and bequeathed. Do your part like a good executor, with a righteous administration, in remembrance of him. But forgetfulness cannot creep upon us, when there is so visible a monument before us to bring it often into our thoughts. Luther says, "It will help a man more in the study of piety, to meditate profoundly upon Christ's passion one day, than to read over all the Psalms of David." A bold comparison : it will, indeed, ravish the soul with trembling, to consider how much Christ loved us, by how much he suffered for us : it will make us look upon sin with horror, which begat such torment and ignominy to the innocent Lamb of God ; it will comfort our weak faith, that he who hath done so great things for us will not abandon us ; and, having subdued our enemies, will not let them renew the battle to overcome us : it will encourage us to lay down our life for him, who hath laid down his life for us. "My meditation of him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord."^a He hath drunk up the cup of sorrow, that I might drink of nothing but the cup of

^a Psalm civ. 34.

salvation. This is the wine^a, which, being given unto him that hath a heavy heart, confutes all the objections of infidelity, despair, an evil conscience, or whatsoever the tempter can suggest against the hope of my glorification. Says the son of Sirach^b, "The remembrance of Josias was as sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine." If the name of Josias was so precious for restoring religion, what melody is there in the remembrance of Christ's name, what music in his banquet, which is the very mercy-seat from whence the voice of the Lord gives the principal oracles of consolation! whose definition I have reserved to be the last words of all: *Consolatio est conveniens unio potentiae cum objecto*; as our best scholars have it, "Consolation is convenient union of any faculty with its object." As when the eye meets with light, it is the comfort of the eye; when the ear meets with harmony, it is the comfort of the ear. What is the most transcendent consolation, therefore, but the union of the soul with God, the best object, in a real and most significative manner, the union of the spirit with Christ in the sacrament of his holy supper! To whom be praise, and glory, and thanksgiving. Amen.

^a Prov. xxxi. 6.

^b Ecclus. xlix. 1.

CHURCH CATECHISM.

A BRIEF DISCOURSE UPON THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

[THOMAS COMBER, D.D.]

THERE are so many excellent expositions of this Catechism, that it is as unnecessary in itself as inconsistent with my purposed brevity, to explain the several particulars thereof; and yet I must not wholly pass by this useful and judicious composure, concerning which I will therefore only make these general remarks:—

1. That the duty of catechising is of divine institution, and hath been observed in all ages of the Church.
2. That this Catechism is in all points agreeable to the primitive forms.
3. That the method thereof is exact, shall be demonstrated by its proper analysis.
4. That all persons concerned ought to promote the learning and understanding thereof.

First, We affirm that catechising is of divine institution, and hath been observed in all ages of the Church; the former of which might be proved by many places of Holy Scripture, but two or three plain texts shall suffice. In the Old Testament, God, by Moses, commands the Jews “to teach his laws diligently to their children,” Deut. vi. 7.; and by Solomon he enjoins us, “to train up a child in the way that he should go,”

Prov. xxii. 6. In the New Testament, Christian parents are charged, to “bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” Ephes. vi. 4.: which precepts are confirmed by the practice of all pious parents and masters from the beginning. Thus did Abraham instruct his children, before the Law, Gen. xviii. 19.; David his, under the Law, 1 Chron. xviii. 9.; and thus Timothy’s parents taught him under the Gospel, 2 Tim. i. 5., iii. 15. But besides this domestic instruction, Moses, by God’s command, enjoins the priests to teach the laws of God to children in the public assembly, Deut. xxxi. 11, 12.; and Jesus renews the same charge to his ministers in that command to St. Peter, “Feed my lambs,” John, xxi. 15. In obedience to which divine laws, the duty of ministers’ instructing the younger sort hath been duly observed, as well among Jews as Christians: for the Jews, Josephus tells us, they were above all things careful that their children might be instructed in the Law^a, and there was in every village a person who was called the “instructor of babes,” to which St. Paul seems to allude, Rom. ii. 20.; and Buxtorfius relates the method which they proceeded in: until ten years of age they taught them the Law, and from thence until fifteen years of age they instructed them in the Talmud^b; to which Grotius adds out of their own authors^c, that at thirteen years of age they use to bring them to the house of God, there to be publicly examined; and being approved, were then declared to be “children of the

^a *Joseph. Antiquit. l. 4. c. 8.*

^b *Buxtorf. Syn. Judaic. c. 3.*

^c *Grotius in Luc. ii. 42.*

precept," that is, obliged to keep the Law. And whereas our Saviour came up to this catechising at twelve years old, it was because of his pregnancy, according to that saying of the Rabbins, "The ingenious do run before the command." This general practice of the Jews was imitated by the Christians, as all their other pious usages were; which makes St. Ambrose say, that this custom was derived from the tradition of the Jews^a; and since our Saviour had also approved and commanded it, in particular to St. Peter, he ordained St. Mark to be the first catechist at Alexandria; and Eusebius notes, that in the year 181, when Pantænus was the instructor of that school of young Christians, this office had flourished there for a long time^b: to Pantænus succeeded Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote his excellent catechism called *Παιδαγωγος*, or "The Child's Guide," and left the place to Origen^c, who afterwards, being advanced to preach to elder Christians, appointed Heraclas to catechise the more ignorant^d; to whom Dionysius was successor.^e The like officer no doubt there was in all other Christian churches, though it be not so fully recorded. At Carthage, St. Cyprian ordained Optatus a reader to catechise the new converts.^f St. Cyril also bore this office at Jerusalem in his youth, and then he wrote those expositions of the Catechism which are extant at this day. (St. Hieron. *de Scriptor. Eccles.*) It were an endless task to give an account of all that the fathers say concerning the necessity and usefulness of

^a Ambros. Comment. in Ephes. iv.

^b Euseb. Hist. l. 5. c. 10.

^d Ibid. l. 6. c. 12.

^c Ibid. l. 6. c. 22.

^e Euseb. l. 6. c. 3.

^f Cypr. ad Clem. ep. 24.

this duty, and no man, who hath but sipped of antiquity, can be ignorant what care was taken in the primitive times to instruct the catechumens in the fundamentals of religion, in some places for two whole years together^a, besides the more solemn catechising of them in the forty days of Lent^b; which sufficiently shows they thought it of great concernment to the Christian religion, that the younger sort were well instructed. There was indeed some difference between the persons which were catechised then, and those which we instruct now; for then generally the catechumens were such as were come to years of discretion, but (having been born of heathen parents) were not yet baptized; so that they catechised them before their baptism, as we do also those who are not baptized till they come to riper years. But (since there are few such now, and almost all Christians are baptized in their infancy) we are necessitated to catechise those that are already baptized: and provided the duty be done, and that this instruction be given to converts or children as soon as they are capable thereof, it is not absolutely necessary it should be before baptism; as our Saviour himself seems to declare, in that he hath placed teaching as well after as before baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. “Go teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:” intimating we must teach new converts before baptism, and may teach others afterwards. Nor yet is this catechising after baptism any ways dissonant from the

^a *Concil. Elliberitan. Can. 42. An.*

^b *Hieron. Ep. ad Pammach. Cyril. Hierosol. Cat. Mystag. 1.*

judgment of the primitive Church; for they then determined that where it was not possible to catechise before baptism, it was sufficient to do it afterwards; as in the case of such as were hastily baptized in sickness: these were by the ancient canons to be instructed in the creed after their baptism^a; and there is a famous instance of this in the baptism of St. Basil, whom the bishop kept for some time after in his house, that he might instruct him in the things pertaining to eternal life.^b And a learned writer affirms, that all baptized persons in the primitive times, although they had been catechised before, yet were wont to stay several days after their baptism, to be more fully catechised in all things necessary unto salvation^c: and therefore there is much more reason for us to catechise children, that were not at all capable of being instructed before they were baptized. And hence it comes to pass, that all the churches in the world now, though differing in many other things, do all agree in this, that it is necessary to catechise children and young people in the grounds of Christian religion: the Papists and Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinists, do all consent in this matter, as I shall show more fully hereafter: this being sufficient to prove the first proposition; viz. That catechising is of divine institution, and ever was observed by the churches of God in all ages.

Secondly, We shall make it evident, that this Catechism of the Church of England is in all points agree-

^a Concil. Laodicen. Can. 59. ; et Concil. Eliber. Can. 38.

^b S. *Amphilocius* in *Vit. S. Basil.*

^c *Vicecomes de Ant. Bapt. Rit.* l. 5. c. 53.

able to the primitive forms: for, first, it is certain we do observe the same form or manner in our catechising as they did in the primitive times, that is, by way of question and answer. So Philip catechised the eunuch, Acts, viii. 17.; and so the persons to be baptized were catechised in the first ages, as we proved before. (Disc. of Bapt. sect. i. § 8.) Hence St. Peter calls it the “answer of a good conscience,” 1 Pet. iii. 21.; and accordingly he enjoins the Christian people “to be ready to give an account of their hope to every one that asks them,” 1 Pet. iii. 15. The same is confirmed also by the definition of an ancient author, who saith, “Catechism is the knowledge of religion first delivered to the ignorant by the catechist, and then by them repeated over again^a,” which appears further from the very original of the word, being derived from ἠχώ, that is, an echo, or a repeated sound, because the catechist did first teach them, and then, by way of question, try if they had learned what he delivered to them: which gave good grounds to the authors of the Roman Catechism to say, “That the manner of the Apostles’ catechising, which the Church yet imitates in the mysteries of baptism, consisted of questions and answers.” (*Præfat. ad Catech. Rom.*) As to the manner, therefore, we imitate the primitive Church. Secondly. And so we do also in the matter of our Catechism; for the catechisms of the first ages were not like those of our modern divines; whose systems of theology were but only, as Clem. Alexandrinus informs us, σύντομος

^a Κατήχησις ἐστὶν ἐπίστημη θεοσεβείας τοῖς ἀπείροις ἤδε παραδοθεῖσα ὑπὸ κατεχήτου καὶ πάλιν ἀποδοθεῖσα ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ. S. Clemens.

παιδεία, a brief instruction; the catechumens of old being obliged to learn no more than to say those things by heart which they were to repeat at their baptism; that is, the Renunciation, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, as we learn from divers passages of the fathers; and we seldom find mention of any more than the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, as the principal parts of the catechising of the ancients. The sixth general council at Constantinople ordains, that the catechumens shall learn the Creed.^a St. Hierom also testifies, that it was the custom of the Church in his time, "to instruct those who were to be baptized for forty days together in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity."^b St. Augustin hath written a peculiar exposition of the Creed to the catechumens, in many places whereof he shows it was the custom of the African Church to catechise young Christians principally in the Creed^c; not excluding the Lord's Prayer, which the same father doth teach to the catechumens, and explain it to them in his two and fortieth Homily. As to this Church of Britain, it is very likely there was no other catechism here of old, but only the exposition of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer: for venerable Bede affirms, that in his time they taught to young converts the Apostles' Creed.^d And the most ancient canons of the Saxons do enjoin the priests "to learn and to teach the Creed

^a "Ὅτι δεῖ τοὺς φωτιζομένους τὴν πίστιν ἐκμανθάνειν. Can. 68. ita Concil. Laod. Can. 46.

^b Hieron. ad Pammac. Epist. 61.

^c August. de Symbolo ad Catechismum. lib. 1. cap. 5., lib. 3. cap. 1., lib. 4. cap.

^d "Novæ vitæ auditoribus symbolum fidei tradimus quod per duodecim Apostolos ordinatum est." Com. in Esdr. ii.

and the Lord's Prayer^a, as being, I suppose, the Catechism of that age. Whence St. Anselm calls catechism, "the doctrine which was at first delivered to us by the Creed and the Lord's Prayer."^b As for the Ten Commandments, although they are not named in the most ancient writers, as part of the primitive Catechism; yet it is not improbable they were taught to young Christians also; because the baptized were to promise to live after God's commandments, as we showed before. (Disc. of Baptism, sect. 1. § 8.) And St. Ambrose saith he instructed those who were to be initiated in moral duties; (*Ambr. lib. de initiand. initio* :) with whom agrees St. Augustine, affirming that the catechumens were not only to be taught the faith, but also the rules of good life; adding, that though the brevity of Scripture do not express it, yet there is no doubt but Philip delivered the eunuch such rules also.^c Howbeit, I find the Ten Commandments enjoined to be taught and explained to the people in some old councils of this nation^d, which shows they have long had a place in the Catechism used in this Church. I conclude, therefore, that the primitive and ancient Catechism did not consist of more than the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, which are all the ancient parts of ours, only the doctrine of the two sacraments (which

^a "Ut dominicam orationem et symbolum, presbyteri discant et doceant." *Synod. Cloves. Can. 10. Excerpt. Egberti Can. 6. ap. Spelm. tom. 1.*

^b "Doctrina quæ in exordio tradita est nobis per symbolum et orationem Dominicam." *Ansel. Com. in Heb. 6.*

^c "Nullo modo dubitandum est, et illa in Catechismo dicta esse quæ ad vitam moresque pertinent." *Aug. de Fide et Operib. cap. 9.*

^d Conc. Lamb. An. Dom. 1281. cap. de Informat. simplic. Item in Const. Georg. Arch. Ebor. An. 1486. Spelm. Conc. tom. 2.

were of old more largely explicated to baptized persons, witness St. Cyril's Mystagogical Catecheses) was prudently added in the days of our fathers, because their Catechism is chiefly designed to fit young Christians for the holy communion. But though I affirm the parts of ancient catechism delivered to catechumens to learn were no more than ours, I deny not but the primitive Church did expound these things more largely to the catechumens, making them understand the meaning of them, and proving their explications by Holy Scripture; which expositions are called exorcisms by St. Cyril^a; and St. Clemens saith^b, "Let the catechumen be taught in the knowledge of God the Father, who is not begotten; of God the Son, the only begotten; and of God the Holy Ghost: let him be taught the order of the creatures, the methods of providence, and why the world was created." And in Dionysius, the catechist teacheth his young Christian "the perfect way of coming to God, and leading the divine life." (Eccles. Hierar.) And this also is required by our Church, (can. 59.), and performed by our ministers, who usually spend the afternoon of the Lord's day in explaining these necessary and fundamental articles and duties, to such as can say the Catechism: so that we come as near to the best antiquity in this our Catechism, as it is possible (in our circumstances) for us to do. I will therefore proceed to show the excellent method of this Catechism, and then exhort all to the use thereof.

^a Cyril. Hierosol. præfat. ad Cateches. p. 4, 5. Ἐφορκίζειν, τουτέστι κατηχεῖν ἀπλῶς. Balsamon Not. ad. Concil. Loadicen. Can. 26.

^b Clement. Const. lib. 7. cap. 39.

The Analysis of the Catechism.

The Catechism containeth two general parts :

1. The baptismal vow, which is,	1. Introduced by mentioning,	<table><tr><td>1. The adjunct of baptism,</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td>Our name,</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td>Quest. I.</td></tr><tr><td>2. The benefits of baptism, viz. to be,</td><td>1. Members of Christ,</td><td rowspan="2">Qu. II.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>2. Children of God,</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>3. Heirs of heaven.</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	1. The adjunct of baptism,	{	Our name,	{	Quest. I.	2. The benefits of baptism, viz. to be,	1. Members of Christ,	Qu. II.		2. Children of God,			3. Heirs of heaven.					
	1. The adjunct of baptism,	{	Our name,		{		Quest. I.													
	2. The benefits of baptism, viz. to be,		1. Members of Christ,				Qu. II.													
	2. Children of God,																			
		3. Heirs of heaven.																		
2. Repeated by showing what we promised,	<table><tr><td>1. To renounce</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td>1. The devil,</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td rowspan="3">Qu. III.</td></tr><tr><td>2. To believe</td><td>2. The world,</td></tr><tr><td>3. To do</td><td>3. The flesh.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>The Creed,</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>The Ten Commandments.</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	1. To renounce	{	1. The devil,	{	Qu. III.	2. To believe	2. The world,	3. To do	3. The flesh.			The Creed,					The Ten Commandments.		
1. To renounce	{	1. The devil,		{			Qu. III.													
2. To believe		2. The world,																		
3. To do		3. The flesh.																		
		The Creed,																		
		The Ten Commandments.																		
3. Owned by declaring,	<table><tr><td>1. Our consent unto it,</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td rowspan="3">Qu. IV.</td></tr><tr><td>2. Our gratitude for it,</td></tr><tr><td>3. Our desire to keep it.</td></tr></table>	1. Our consent unto it,	{	Qu. IV.	2. Our gratitude for it,	3. Our desire to keep it.														
1. Our consent unto it,	{	Qu. IV.																		
2. Our gratitude for it,																				
3. Our desire to keep it.																				
2. The explication thereof, as to	1. The <i>Credenda</i> , or things to be believed,	<table><tr><td>Contained in</td><td rowspan="2">{</td><td>The Creed.</td><td rowspan="2">{</td><td>Qu. V.</td></tr><tr><td>Explained by</td><td>The following question.</td><td>Qu. VI.</td></tr></table>	Contained in	{	The Creed.	{	Qu. V.	Explained by	The following question.	Qu. VI.										
	Contained in	{	The Creed.		{		Qu. V.													
	Explained by		The following question.	Qu. VI.																
	2. The <i>Agenda</i> , or the things to be done.	1. As to the matter of them,	<table><tr><td>Contained in</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td>The Ten Commandments.</td><td rowspan="3">{</td><td>Qu. VII. VII</td></tr><tr><td>Explained by showing our</td><td>Duty to God,</td><td>Qu. IX. X.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Duty to our neighbour.</td><td>Qu. XI.</td></tr></table>	Contained in	{	The Ten Commandments.	{	Qu. VII. VII	Explained by showing our	Duty to God,	Qu. IX. X.		Duty to our neighbour.	Qu. XI.						
		Contained in	{	The Ten Commandments.		{		Qu. VII. VII												
		Explained by showing our		Duty to God,				Qu. IX. X.												
		Duty to our neighbour.		Qu. XI.																
	3. As to the means to perform them, viz.	1. Devout prayer, which is	<table><tr><td>Taught in</td><td rowspan="2">{</td><td>The Lord's prayer.</td><td rowspan="2">{</td><td>Qu. XII.</td></tr><tr><td>Explained by</td><td>The following question.</td><td>Qu. XIII.</td></tr></table>	Taught in	{	The Lord's prayer.	{	Qu. XII.	Explained by	The following question.	Qu. XIII.									
		Taught in	{	The Lord's prayer.		{		Qu. XII.												
	Explained by	The following question.		Qu. XIII.																
	2. A due use of the Sacraments,	1. Which are explained in general as to	<table><tr><td>1. Their number.</td><td rowspan="2">{</td><td>Qu. XIV.</td></tr><tr><td>2. Their nature.</td><td>Qu. XV.</td></tr></table>	1. Their number.	{	Qu. XIV.	2. Their nature.	Qu. XV.												
		1. Their number.	{	Qu. XIV.																
2. Their nature.	Qu. XV.																			
2. Treated of in particular, viz.	1. The Sacrament of baptism.	{	Qu. XVI.																	
	2. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper.		XVII. XVI XIX. XX.																	
		{	Qu. XXI.																	
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Whatsoever hath been hitherto said of the divine institution of catechising, and the excellency of this Catechism, both for its agreeableness to antiquity and its own exact method, tends chiefly to the last particular ; which is, fourthly, to exhort all persons to promote the learning and understanding thereof: for, doubtless, catechising is one of the most necessary of all Christian duties. Hegesippus tells us that, by this way of catechising, the Christian religion was suddenly spread over most parts of the known world within forty years after Christ. And as it was thus planted, so it must be thus preserved ; for if we neglect to instruct our posterity, religion would die with this generation, and the next age would become barbarous and atheistical ; and therefore all churches have been very careful to enjoin the practice of catechising. The Council of Trent declares it to be the best means to preserve and propagate their religion, to compose a catechism, and command all parish priests to instruct their people in it. (*Concil. Trident.*, sess. 24. cap. 7.) Luther, also, in the beginning of the Reformation, writ two catechisms, and not only prescribed but used this duty himself, declaring he delighted in it more than in all his other offices.* The like care was taken in this matter by Calvin at Geneva, and by all the eminent reformers in all nations, as well as in this of ours ; so that Sir Edwin Sands observes, that nothing did more conduce to enlarge the Protestant faith than the diligent catechising used by the reformed divines ; yea, the Romanists confess as much in the preface to their Catechism, saying, “ Our age is sadly

* Luther. in Psalm cxxvi. tom. 4. p. 57.

sensible what mischief they have done the Church, not only by their tongues, but especially by those writings which they are wont to call catechisms." (*Præfat. ad Catech. Rom.*) And doubtless there can be no means so likely to prevent the designs of the Papists, to root out the increase of atheists, and to unite those differences which faction hath made among us, as constant and careful catechising the younger sort, who are the very hopes of the next generation. The Athenians, inquiring at the oracle how their commonwealth might become happy, were told, they should be fortunate if they did hang their most precious things at their children's ears; by which was meant, instructing them in the principles of piety and virtue^a: and, doubtless, the counsel is very proper for us at this time. The Cretians taught their children three things in their youth: 1. The laws of their country; 2. The praises of their gods; 3. The encomiums of such as had been valiant men^b; supposing this would make them just, religious, and courageous. But we Christians have the express command of God for the early instruction of our children; and we have many reasons to engage our care therein. First. The consideration of the natural ignorance of children in good things, who, though they learn evil easily, and without a tutor, yet cannot be taught virtue without much difficulty, and many instructions^c; so that, if we do not catechise them early and often, they will know no more of divine things than brutes, and only become

^a Caussin par. Hist. l. 12. c. 2. ^b Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 39.

^c "Rarum et difficile est fieri bonum, facile et pronum est esse malum, et hæc, sine magistro, sine exemplo, doctrinâ statim imbuimur." *Cypr.*

wise to do evil. Secondly. Let us reflect upon the miseries to which those children are exposed, which are not grounded in the knowledge of religion. It is almost impossible but they should make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience: every wind turns them, every rock splits them, and they stick upon every sand, who want this skill to be their pilot; they may easily be drawn into atheism or idolatry, popery or enthusiasm: and generally they fall either into damnable errors or deadly sins, and so ruin their precious souls to all eternity. No wonder, then, that God, "who would have all to be saved, would have all to come to the knowledge of the truth," (1 Tim. ii. 4.) since without this knowledge there is no hope of salvation; and children had better never been born than be left thus to perish eternally by the cruel negligence of their inhuman parents. Thirdly. This kind of instruction by catechising is the foundation of all other improvements: reading, preaching, reproof, and exhortation are all cast away upon uncatechised persons; but if they be first well principled, then they may profit by all other duties. If this be first well done, then we may expect they will grow in wisdom and in grace; this will make them good subjects, dutiful children, useful members of church or state. And whatever height any persons have arisen unto, either in knowledge of religion or practice of virtue^a, this was the groundwork upon which they built, and therefore must not be despised. Let me, therefore, earnestly press all persons that are concerned

^a "Non contemnenda sunt parva, sine quibus magna constare non possunt." *Hier. ad Lat. ep. 7.*

to promote this profitable and necessary, pious and primitive exercise. And, 1. Let ministers remember their Lord's command to his great Apostle, and be sure not to despise to feed his lambs. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and the greatest of the fathers of the ancient Church, did not disdain this office; and it is certain their sermons can never do good upon an uncatechised congregation; but by constant catechising they shall arm their people against heresies as well as evil practices, and take the best course to set them early in the right way to heaven. Let parents and masters privately condescend to instruct them, and then publicly bring them to God's house to be examined, where their ready answers will be as great an honour as a comfort to those who have instructed them. "He that teacheth his child the Law," saith R. Nachman, "is worthy to sit in the presence of God; but he that doth not, it were well for him if he were blind, that he might not see the disgrace that will befall him." And, doubtless, the obedience and piety which children and servants learn by this duty is a sufficient reward for all the pains that are taken with them therein; nor will any good masters think it a disgrace to teach the meanest of their servants, when they consider that King Louis IX. of France catechised his kitchen boy, saying, "He hath a soul, which was bought with Christ's precious blood, as well as mine." 3. Let children be willing to come, not being ashamed to learn, for it is no shame to be ignorant when we desire to be instructed; but the only shame is to resolve to continue ignorant still. I add, that not only children in age, but in understanding also, must come

to public catechising ; even servants, and all others who know not the first principles of religion, as St. Paul teacheth us (Heb. v. 13.), and our canons require. The older they are, the more haste they had need to make to get this necessary instruction, without which if they die they are in evident peril of damnation. And ministers, parents, masters, and those under their charge do all join their endeavours herein, the success will soon convince us how admirable a form of catechising we have, and how necessary and beneficial it is for us to learn and understand it.

ON CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION.

[BISHOP BEVERIDGE.]

THOUGHTS UPON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

IF the principles of the Christian religion were well rooted in the hearts of all mankind, what excellent fruit would they produce! The earth would put on another face, bearing some resemblance of heaven itself; idolatry, with all sorts of wickedness and vice, would be every where discountenanced and suppressed, for all would worship the one living and true God, and him only. There would be no more wars, nor rumours of wars; kingdom would not rise against kingdom, nor nation against nation, but all princes would be at peace with their neighbours, and their subjects at unity among themselves, striving about nothing but which should serve God best, and do most good in the world. Then piety, and justice, and charity would revive and flourish again all the world over, and particularly in the church and kingdom to which we belong. Then the prayers would be read twice a day in every parish, as the law requires, and all people would heartily join together in offering them up to the Almighty Creator of the world. Then all that are of riper years would, at least every Lord's day, *celebrate the memory of the death of Christ, by which*

their sins are expiated, and the Most High God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father. And as all sorts of people would thus continually worship God in his own house, so, wheresoever they are, they would do all they could to serve and honour him; “whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they would do all to his glory.” And as for their fellow-servants, they would all “love as brethren,” and every one “seek another’s good as well as their own.” “Whatsoever they would that men should do to them, they would do the same to all other men.” In short, all would then “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world,” and so walk hand in hand together in the narrow way that leads to everlasting life. This would be the happy state of all mankind if they were but well-grounded in that religion which the eternal Son of God hath planted upon earth.

But not to speak of other people, we of this nation rarely find any such effect of this religion among ourselves, though it be as generally professed, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any nation. There are but few that are ever the better for it; the most being here also as bad, both in their principles and practices, as they which live in the darkest corners of the earth, where the light of the Gospel never yet shined. Though the kingdoms in general be Christian, there are many heathens in it, people that were never christened; many that were once christened, and are now turned heathens again, living as “without God in the world;” many that would still be thought Christians,

and yet have apostatised so far as to lay aside both the sacraments which Christ ordained, and every thing else that can show them to be so; many that “privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and so bring upon themselves swift destruction;” many that “follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of, and through covetousness with feigned words make merchandise of men,” as St. Peter foretold, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. Many “who will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” and so fulfil the prophecy of St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 3. And of those who still continue in the communion of the Church, and in the outward profession of the true Christian faith, there are many who, although “they profess to know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate,” Tit. i. 16. Many, did I say? I wish I could not say almost all. But, alas! it is too plain to be denied.

For, of that vast company of people that are called Christians in this kingdom, how few are there that live as becometh the Gospel of Christ, that finish the work which God hath given them to do, even glorify him in the world? How many that refuse or neglect to worship and serve him upon his own day? How few that do it upon any other day, when they have any thing else to do? How many that never received the sacrament of the Lord’s supper in their whole lives? How few that receive it above two or three times in the year, how often soever they are invited to it? How many

are the proud, the passionate, the covetous, the intemperate, the incontinent, the unjust, the profane and impious, in comparison of the humble, and meek, and liberal, and sober, and modest, and righteous, and holy among us? The disproportion is so vastly great, that none but God himself can make the comparison; so little of Christianity is now to be found amongst Christians themselves: to our shame be it spoken.

It is, indeed, a matter of so much shame as well as grief, to all that have any regard for the honour of Christ their Saviour, that they cannot but be very solicitous to know how it comes to pass that his doctrine and precepts are so generally slighted and neglected as they are in our days, and how they may be observed better for the future than now they are? Both which questions may be easily resolved; for we cannot wonder that of the many which profess the Christian religion there are so few that live up to it, when we consider how few are duly instructed in the first principles of it.

The religion which Christ hath revealed to the world is by his grace and blessing settled and established among us, so as to be made the religion of the kingdom in general; and therefore all that are born in it are, or ought to be, according to his order or institution, soon after baptized, and so made his disciples, or Christians by profession. And the Church takes security of those who thus bring a child to be baptized, that when it comes to be capable of it, it shall be instructed in the Catechism which she for that purpose hath set forth, containing all the principles of that religion into which it was baptized. But notwithstanding this hath been

neglected for many years, whereby it is come to pass that the far greatest part of the people in this kingdom know little or nothing of the religion they profess, but only to profess it as the religion of the country where they live; they may, perhaps, be very zealous for it, as all people are for the religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their lives according to it, because they were never rightly informed about it, or at least not soon enough, before error or sin hath got possession of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it; for they are always "as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," Eph. iv. 14. And whatsoever sin gets dominion over them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal bodies, so that they obey it in the lusts thereof, in spite of all that can be said to them out of God's own word; for they are no way edified by any thing they hear, in that the foundation is not first laid upon which they should build up themselves in that most holy faith that is preached to them. The word they hear is as "seed that falls by the way side," or "upon a rock," or "else among thorns," and so never comes to perfection; their hearts not being prepared beforehand and rightly disposed for it, by having the principles of the doctrine of Christ first infused into them.

This, therefore, being the great cause of that shameful decay of the Christian religion that is so visible *among us*, we can never expect to see it repaired unless *the great duty of catechising* be revived, and the laws

that are made about it be strictly observed, all the kingdom over; as most certainly they ought to be, not only as they are the laws both of the Church and State under which we live, but likewise for that they are grounded upon the word of God himself, who expressly commands the same thing by his Apostle, saying, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

For here, by "nurture," we are to understand, as the Greek word *παιδεία* signifies, that discipline which parents ought to exercise over their children to prevent their falling into, or continuing in, any wicked course. And by the "admonition of the Lord" is meant the catechising, or putting them in mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of what he would have them believe and do that they may be saved. For the original word *νουθεσία*, which we translate admonition, properly signifies catechising. (*Κατηκίζειν νουθετεῖν*, Hesych.) And therefore to catechise or instruct children in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ is a duty here laid upon all parents by Almighty God himself; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord, by catechising or teaching them the principles of his religion, they all live in the breach of a plain law, a law made by the supreme Lawgiver of the world, and must accordingly answer for it at the last day.

Wherefore all that are sensible of the great account which they must give of all their actions, at that time, to *he Judge of the whole world*, cannot but make as much

conscience of this as of any duty whatsoever, so as to use the utmost of their care and diligence that their children may “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” and so be “wise unto salvation.” Neither is this any hard matter for those to do who live in the communion of our Church, having such a Catechism or summary of the Christian religion drawn up to their hands, which is easy both for parents to teach and for children to learn ; and yet so full and comprehensive, that it contains all things necessary for any man to know in order to his being saved : as you may clearly see, if you do but cast your eye upon the method and contents of it ; which may be all reduced to these five heads : — the Baptismal Vow, the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments ordained by our Lord Christ.

It begins where a child begins to be a Christian, and therefore hath a Christian name given him, even at his baptism, “wherein he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven :” which great privileges belong to all that are baptized, and to none else ; none else being in the number of Christ’s disciples : for our Lord Christ, a little before his ascension into heaven, left orders with his Apostles, and, in them, with all that should succeed in the ministry of the Church to the end of the world, to make all nations his disciples, by baptizing them “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” as the original words plainly import, Matt. xxviii. 19. And therefore, as people of all nations are capable of being

made his disciples, so none now are nor ever can be made so any other way than by being baptized according to his order. But they who are not thus made his disciples by being "baptized unto him," are not the "members of Christ;" and if they be not the "members of Christ," they cannot be the "children of God," nor have any right to the "kingdom of heaven," that being promised only to such as "believe and are baptized," Mark, xvi. 16. And our Saviour himself elsewhere also saith, "That except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John, iii. 5. Whereby we may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament, where it may be had, as our Church observes in her office for the ministration of it to such as are of riper years.

It is to be further observed, that when our Saviour ordained baptism to be the way or means of admitting persons into his Church, or the congregation of his disciples, lest we should think, as some have done, that he meant it only of those who are of riper years, he used the most general terms that could be invented, requiring that "all nations" should be so baptized; and if "all nations," then children also, which are a great, if not the greatest, part of every nation. And, accordingly, his Church hath always baptized children as well as adult persons. When any who were come to years of discretion were willing and desirous to become Christ's disciples, that they might learn of him the way to heaven, they were made so by being baptized; and if they had children, they were also baptized at the same time with their parents: and so were the children

which were afterwards born to them; they also were baptized soon after they were born. And that it is our Saviour's pleasure that children also should be brought into his Church, appears likewise in that when his disciples rebuked those who brought children to him, he was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Mark, x. 14.

But seeing they who are thus baptized according to the institution of Christ are thereby made his disciples, and in him the "children of God," it is necessary they should then promise to believe and live, from that time forward, according as he hath commanded; which promise, therefore, all that are grown up always used to make every one in his own person, and for that purpose were and ought to be catechised beforehand, and put in mind of what they were to promise when they were baptized, and therefore were called catechumens. But children not being capable of making any such promise themselves, in their own persons, they were always admitted, and required to do it by their guardians, that is, by their godfathers and godmothers, which brought and offered them to be baptized; and are therefore obliged to take care that they be afterwards catechised, or instructed in the principles of that religion into which they were admitted, and put in mind of the promise which they then made of framing their lives according to it.

This promise, therefore, which children make at their baptism by their sureties, and which is implied in the

very nature of the sacrament, whether they have any doubts or no, it consists of three general heads.

First, "That they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world and all the sinful lusts of the flesh."

Secondly, "That they will believe all the articles of the Christian faith."

Thirdly, "That they will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life."

Which three things, under which the whole substance of the Christian religion is contained, being all promised by children when they are baptized into it, it is absolutely necessary that they be afterwards put in mind so soon as they are capable, of the promise which they then made, and of the obligation which lies upon them to perform it: for otherwise it can never be expected that they should either do, or so much as know what they are to do; whereas the instructing them in this, the first part of the Catechism, will prepare and dispose them for understanding all the rest.

Particularly the Apostles' Creed, which is next taught them, containing all those articles of the Christian faith which they promised to believe, and nothing else; nothing but what is grounded upon plain texts of Scripture, and hath been always believed by the whole catholic Church, in all ages and places all the world over. Here are none of those private opinions and controverted points which have so long disturbed the Church, and serve only to perplex men's minds and take them off from the more substantial and necessary.

duties of religion, as we have found by woful experience, which our Church hath taken all possible care to prevent, by inserting no other articles of faith into the catechism which her members are to learn, than what are contained in this creed, received and approved of by the whole Christian world; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to “believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost,” in whose name they were christened, and therefore must continue in this faith, or cease to be Christians.

The other thing which they who are baptized promise is, “That they will keep God’s commandments,” which therefore are next taught in the Catechism, without any mixture of human inventions or constitutions: those Ten Commandments which the supreme Lawgiver himself proclaimed upon Mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with his own finger upon two tables of stone. These they all are bound to learn, because they are bound to keep them all, as they will answer it at the last day, when all mankind shall be judged by them.

But no man can keep these commandments without God’s special grace, which we have no ground to expect without praying to him for it. And therefore children are in the next place taught how to pray according to that form which Christ himself composed, and commanded us to say whensoever we pray, Luke, xi. 2. And as he who believes all that is in the Apostles’ Creed, believes all that he need believe; and he that keeps all the Ten Commandments, doth all that he need to do; so he that prays this prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of. So that in this short

Catechism, which children of five years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them, either to believe, or do, or pray for.

The last part of the Catechism is concerning the two sacraments which Christ hath ordained in his Church, as “generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, baptism and the Lord’s supper;” both which our Church hath there explained with such extraordinary prudence and caution, as to take in all that is necessary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the disputes that have been raised about them, to the great prejudice of the Christian religion.

Seeing, therefore, this Catechism is so full, that it contains all that any man needs to know, and yet so short, that a child may learn it; I do not see how parents can bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” better than by instructing them in it. I do not say, by teaching them only to say it by rote, but by instructing them in it, so that they may understand, as soon and as far as they are capable, the true sense and meaning of all the words and phrases in every part of it; for which purpose it will be necessary to observe these rules.

First, you must begin betime, before your children have got any ill habits, which may be easily prevented, but are not so easily cured. When children are baptized, being “born again of water and of the Spirit,” as the guilt of their original sin is washed away in the laver of regeneration, so that it will never be imputed to them, unless it break forth afterwards into actual

transgressions; so they receive also the Spirit of God, to prevent all such eruptions, by enabling them to resist the “temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil;” to believe and serve God according as they then promised; so far at least that “sin shall not have dominion over them, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, seeing now they are not under the law, but under the grace of Christ.” Rom. vi. 12. 14. But that the seeds of grace which were then sown in their hearts may not be lost or stifled, but grow up to perfection, great care must be taken that they may be taught, so soon as they are capable to discern between good and evil, to avoid the evil and do the good; and to believe and live as they promised when they were endued with grace to do it. “Hast thou children?” saith the son of Sirach, “instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth.” Eccles. vii. 23. “Give thy son no liberty in his youth, and wink not at his follies. Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the sides while he is a child; lest he wax stubborn and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart.” Ch. xxx. 11, 12. Whereas “he that gathereth instruction from his youth, shall find wisdom till his old age.” Ch. vi. 18. According to that of the Wise Man: “Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Prov. xxii. 6. As Timothy “from a child had known the Holy Scriptures.” 2 Tim. iii. 15. And that was the reason that he was so expert in them when he became a man. Which, therefore, that your children may also be, the first thing they *learn* must be their Catechism, where they are taught all

the great truths and duties that are revealed in the Holy Scriptures as necessary to salvation.

But how can such parents do this that cannot read nor say the Catechism themselves? This, I fear, is the case of too many among us. There are many who, having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or think scorn to learn it afterwards, and so lose all the benefit and comfort which they might receive by reading of the Holy Scriptures. But this, I confess, is not so necessary, especially in our Church, where the Holy Scriptures are so constantly read in public, that if people would as constantly come and hearken to them, they might be "wise unto salvation," although they cannot read; as few heretofore could, at least in the primitive times, when, notwithstanding, they attained to the knowledge of God, and of their duty to him, as well as if they had been the greatest scholars in the world. But then, considering that they could not read, they supplied that defect by attending more diligently to what they heard out of God's holy word, and laying it up in their hearts, so that they understood all the principles of the Christian religion, and were able to instruct their children in the same, as well as if they could read. But this is not our case; for now there are many who can neither read nor so much as say the Catechism, having never learned it themselves, and therefore cannot possibly teach it their children. Such as the Apostle speaks of, who "when, for the time, they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have

need of milk, and not of strong meat." Heb. v. 12. And what must such do? They certainly, as they tender their own good, must be doubly diligent in the use of all means that may tend to their edification and instruction. And as they desire the good of their children, they must send them to school, or provide some other person to teach them; which if the parents neglect to do, the godfathers and godmothers of every child should put them in mind of it, and see that the child be taught, so soon as he is able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he made by them at his baptism. And that he may know these things the better, they must call upon him to hear sermons; and chiefly they must provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, as they are contained in the Church Catechism, and then to bring them to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.

But for that purpose, when children have been taught the Catechism, they must be sent to the minister or curate of the parish where they live, that he may examine and instruct them in it; examine whether they can say it, and instruct them so as to make them understand it. For though the words be all as plain as they can be well made, yet the things signified by those words are many of them so high, that it cannot be expected that children should reach and apprehend them *without help*; which, therefore, they must go to their *minister for*, whose duty and office it is to acquaint them

with the full sense and meaning of every word, what is signified by it, and what ground they have to believe it in God's holy word. But to do this to any purpose requires more time than is commonly allowed for it in our days ; and that is one great reason there are so few among us that are "built up," as they ought to be, "in their most holy faith." Many refuse or neglect to send their children to be catechised at all ; and they who send them, send them so little, and for so little a time, that it is morally impossible they should be much the better for it : as many have found by experience ; who, although in their childhood they were taught the Catechism, and could say it readily, yet, having not been sufficiently instructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and knew no more than as if they had never learnt it. I wish this be not the case of too many parents : wherefore, that this great work may be done effectually, so as to answer its end ; as children should begin as soon as ever they are able to learn the Catechism, and go on, by degrees, till they can say it perfectly by heart ; so, when they can do that, they are still to continue to be instructed in it all along, till they understand it all so well as to be fit to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which usually may be about sixteen or seventeen years of age, more or less, according to their several capacities. By this means, as they grow in years, they would grow also in grace, and in "the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. iii. 18. This likewise would be a great encouragement to the minister to take pains with them, when they are such as can understand what he

saith to them, and will continue under his care and conduct till they are “settled and grounded in the faith, and have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil;” and so shall be every way qualified to serve God, and do their duty to him, “in that state of life to which he shall be pleased afterwards to call them” upon earth, and then to go to heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the kingdom, that all children that are born and bred up in it were thus fully instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and of that religion which he hath revealed to the world, till they are fit for the holy communion, and ready to engage in the affairs of the world, the next generation would be much better than this, and Christianity would then begin to flourish again, and appear in its native beauty and lustre. And verily, whatsoever some may think, such especially as were never catechised themselves, this is as great and necessary a duty as any that is required in all the Bible. For God himself, by his Apostle, expressly commands all parents to bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord;” that is, as I have showed, to catechise or instruct them in the principles of the doctrine of our Lord Christ. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a known law, yea, of many laws; there being many places in God’s holy word, where the same thing is commanded in other terms by Almighty God himself, saying, “These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou *shalt teach them diligently thy children.*” Deut. vi. 7. And again, “Therefore shall ye lay up these words in

your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall teach them your children." Chap. xi. 18, 19. So, also, chap. iv. 10. This is that which he commands, also, by the Wise Man : " Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6. The word in the original which we translate " train up " signifies also to dedicate or devote a child to the service of God, by instructing him how to do it, and exercising him continually in it; and therefore, in the margin of our Bibles, it is translated " catechise " a child ; so that we have here both the necessity and usefulness of this duty : the necessity, in that it is commanded to train up or catechise a child in the ways of God ; and the usefulness, in that what a child is thus taught will remain with him all his life long.

Seeing, therefore, that God hath laid so strict a command upon all parents, to bring up their children in the knowledge of himself, and of their duty to him, they can expect no other but that he should take particular notice whether they do it or not ; and reward or punish them accordingly. As we see in Abraham, what a special kindness had God for him upon this account. " Shall I hide from him," saith the Lord, " that thing which I do ? seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations upon earth shall be blessed in him." But why had he such an extraordinary favour for Abraham above all other men ? God himself gives us the reason of it, saying, "*For I know that he will command his children and his*

household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. xviii. 19. This was the reason that Abraham was so much in his favour, that he was called the "friend of God." James, ii. 23.

And how much God is displeased with parents neglecting to bring up their children in his true faith and fear, and suffering them to grow up and go on in a course of vice and profaneness, appears sufficiently from that severe judgment which he inflicted upon Eli and his whole house for it; saying to Samuel, "For I have told him, even Eli, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." 1 Sam. iii. 13, 14. The execution of which dreadful judgment is left upon record in the Holy Scriptures, as a standing monument and caution to all parents, to take heed how they educate their children.

Be sure the saints of God, in all ages, have taken as much care to bring up their children well, as to live well themselves; making as much conscience of this as of any duty whatsoever which they owe to God: that the children which he hath given them may answer his end in giving them; that they may not be insignificant cyphers in the world, or as fruitless trees that serve only to cumber the ground, but that they may serve and glorify God whilst they are upon earth, so as to be "*meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*"

And verily all parents would make this their continual care and study, if they minded either their own or their children's good. Many complain, not without cause, that their children are disobedient and undutiful to them; but the cause is chiefly in themselves. When they have neglected their duty to their children, how can they expect their children should perform their duty to them? They were never taught it; how then can they do it? If, therefore, they prove stubborn and obstinate, — if they give themselves up to all manner of vice and wickedness, — if, instead of a comfort, they be a grief and trouble to their parents, — their parents must blame themselves for it: and when they come to reflect upon it, their sin, in neglecting their duty to God and their children in their education, will be a greater trouble to them than any their children can give them. Whereas, when parents bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord,” if their children notwithstanding happen to miscarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their duty, and have nothing to answer for upon that account.

But what a mighty advantage would it be to the children themselves, to be thus continually put in mind of their baptismal vow, the articles of our faith, the duties of religion, and what else is contained in the Catechism, from their childhood all along till they come to be men or women? Their minds would be then filled with such divine truths, and with so great a sense of their duty, that there would be no room left for heresy or sin to enter, at least not so as to get possession and exercise any dominion there. The first impressions that

are made upon us are not soon worn out, but usually remain as long as we live. As the wise man observes, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6. When one hath been all along from his childhood brought up in the knowledge of God and his holy will, it will stick by him, so as to be a constant check upon him, to keep him within the compass of his duty in all ordinary cases; and if anything extraordinary happen to draw him aside, it will make him restless and uneasy, till he hath recovered himself, and got into the right way again: and so it will either keep him innocent, or make him penitent. In short, by the blessing of God attending, as it usually doth, this great duty, when it is conscientiously performed, this is the best means that parents can use, whereby to breed up their children for heaven, to make them "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God," both in this world and for ever.

Wherefore, if we have any regard either to our own or to our children's eternal welfare, let us set upon this duty in good earnest; let us bring up our children so long in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," till they fully know him, and all that he would have them believe and do, that they may be saved. But we must be sure to teach them by our example as well as instructions: we must not tell them one thing, and do another ourselves; but show them how to keep the faith and the laws of God, by keeping them ourselves before their eyes, all the while we live together upon earth: that when ye are all got, one after another, out of

this troublesome and naughty world, we and our children may at last meet together in heaven, and there praise and glorify Almighty God, we for them and they for us, and all for his grace and truth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

After this general instruction in the principles of our holy religion, it will be necessary, as soon as our young Christian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the nature of God, and the great mystery of the Trinity, into which we are all baptized; which, therefore, shall be my next subject.

ON GROWTH IN GRACE.

[BISHOP, TAYLOR.]

PART I.

2 PET. iii. 18.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ: to whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

When Christianity, like “the day-spring from the east,” with a new light did not only enlighten the world, but amazed the minds of men, and entertained their curiosity, and seized upon their warmer and more pregnant affections, it was no wonder that whole nations were converted at a sermon, multitudes were instantly professed, and their understandings followed their affections, and their wills followed their understandings, and they were convinced by miracle, and overcome by grace, and passionate with zeal, and wisely governed by their guides, and ravished with the sanctity of the doctrine and the holiness of their examples. And this was not only their duty, but a great instance of providence, that by the great religion and piety of the first professors, Christianity might be firmly planted,

and unshaken by scandal, and hardened by persecution; and that these first lights might be actual precedents for ever, and copies for us to transcribe in all descending ages of Christianity, that thither we might run to fetch oil to enkindle our extinguished lamps. But then piety was so universal, that it might well be enjoined by St. Paul, that "if a brother walked disorderly," the Christians should avoid his company: he forbade them not to accompany with the heathens that walked disorderly; "for then a man must have gone out of the world;" but they were not to endure so much as "to eat with" or "to salute a disorderly brother," and ill-living Christian. But now, if we should observe this canon of St. Paul, and refuse to eat or to converse with a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a perjured person, or covetous, we must also "go out of the world:" for a pious or a holy person is now as rare as a disorderly Christian was at first; and as Christianity is multiplied every where in name and title, so it is destroyed in life, essence, and proper operation; and we have very great reason to fear that Christ's name will serve us to no end but to upbraid our baseness, and his person only to be our judge, and his laws as so many bills of accusation, and his graces and helps offered us but as aggravations of our unworthiness, and our baptism but an occasion of vow-breach, and the holy communion but an act of hypocrisy, formality, or sacrilege, and all the promises of the Gospel but as pleasant dreams, and the threatenings but as arts of affrightment. For Christianity lasted pure and zealous, *it kept its rules, and observed its own laws*, for three

hundred years, or thereabouts: so long the Church remained a virgin; for so long they were warmed with their first fires, and kept under discipline by the rod of persecution: but it hath declined almost fourteen hundred years together; prosperity and pride, wantonness and great fortunes, ambition and interest, false doctrine upon mistake and upon design, the malice of the devil and the arts of all his instruments, the want of zeal and a weariness of spirit, filthy examples and a disreputation of piety and a strict life, seldom precedents and infinite discouragements, have caused so infinite a declension of piety and holy living, that what Papirius Massonius, one of their own, said of the popes of Rome, *In Pontificibus nemo hodie sanctitatem requirit; optimi putantur si vel leviter mali sint, vel minus boni quàm cæteri mortales esse solent*; “No man looks for holiness in the bishops of Rome; those are the best popes who are not extremely wicked:” the same is too true of the greatest part of Christians; men are excellent persons if they be not traitors or adulterous, oppressors or injurious, drunkards or scandalous, if they be not “as this publican,” as the vilest person with whom they converse.

“Nunc, si depositum non infitietur amicus,
Si reddat veterem cum tota ærugine follem;
Prodigiosa fides, et Tuscis digna libellis,
Quæque coronata lustrari debeat agna.” *Juven. Sat. 13. 60.*

He that is better than the dregs of his own age, whose religion is something above profaneness, and whose sobriety is a step or two from downright intemperance; whose discourse is not swearing, nor yet apt to edify, whose charity is set out in piety, and a gentle

yearning, and saying “God help!” whose alms are contemptible, and his devotion infrequent; yet, as things are now, he is *unus è millibus*, “one of a thousand,” and he stands eminent and conspicuous in the valleys and lower grounds of the present piety; for a bank is a mountain upon a level: but what is rare and eminent in the manners of men this day, would have been scandalous, and have deserved the rod of an Apostle, if it had been confronted with the fervours and rare devotion and religion of our fathers in the Gospel.

Men of old looked upon themselves as they stood by the examples and precedents of martyrs, and compared their piety to the life of St. Paul, and estimated their zeal by flames of the Boanerges, St. James and his brother; and the bishops were thought reprobable as they fell short of the ordinary government of St. Peter and St. John; and the assemblies of Christians were so holy, that every meeting had religion enough to hallow a house, and convert it to a church; and every day of feasting was a communion, and every fasting-day was a day of repentance and alms, and every day of thanksgiving was a day of joy and alms; and religion began all their actions, and prayer consecrated them, and they ended in charity, and were not polluted with design: they despised the world heartily, and pursued after heaven greedily; they knew no ends but to serve God, and to be saved; and had no designs upon their neighbours, but to lead them to God, and to felicity; till Satan, full of envy to see such excellent days, mingled covetousness and ambition within the throngs and conventions of the Church, and a vice crept into an

office: and then the mutual confidence grew less, and so charity was lessened; and heresies crept in, and then faith began to be sullied; and pride crept in, and then men snatched at offices, not for the work, but for the dignity; and then they served themselves more than God and the Church: till at last it came to that pass where now it is, that the clergy live lives no better than the laity, and the laity are stooped to imitate the evil customs of strangers and enemies of Christianity; so that we should think religion in a good condition, if that men did offer up to God but the actions of an ordinary, even, and just life, without the scandal and allays of a great impiety. But because such is the nature of things, that either they grow towards perfection, or decline towards dissolution, there is no proper way to secure it but by setting its growth forward: for religion hath no station or natural periods; if it does not grow better, it grows much worse; not that it always returns the man into scandalous sins, but that it establishes and fixes him in a state of indifferency and lukewarmness; and he is more averse to a state of improvement, and dies in an incurious, ignorant, and unrelenting condition.

“But grow in grace.” That is the remedy, and that would make us all wise and happy, blessed in this world, and sure of heaven. Concerning which we are to consider, First, What the state of “grace” is into which every one of us must be entered, that we may “grow” in it. Secondly, The proper parts, acts, and *offices* of “growing in grace.” Thirdly, The signs, *consequences*, and proper significations, by which, if we

cannot perceive the growing, yet afterwards we may perceive that we are grown, and so judge of the state of our duty, and concerning our final condition of being saved.

1. Concerning the state of grace, I consider that no man can be said to be in the state of grace who retains an affection to any one sin. The state of pardon and the divine favour begins at the first instance of anger against our crimes, when we leave our fondnesses and kind opinions, when we excuse them not, and will not endure their shame, when we feel the smarts of any of their evil consequents: for he that is a perfect lover of sin, and is “sealed up to a reprobate sense,” endures all that sin brings along with it; and is reconciled to all its mischiefs: he can suffer the sickness of his own drunkenness, and yet call it pleasure; he can wait like a slave to serve his lust, and yet count it no disparagement; he can suffer the dishonour of being accounted a base and dishonest person, and yet look confidently, and think himself no worse. But when the grace of God begins to work upon a man’s spirit, it makes the conscience nice and tender; and although the sin as yet does not displease the man, but he can endure the flattering and alluring part, yet he will not endure to be used so ill by his sin; he will not be abused and dishonoured by it. But because God hath so allayed the pleasure of his sin, that he that drinks the sweet should also strain the dregs through his throat, by degrees God’s grace doth irreconcile the convert, and discovers, first, its base attendants, then its worse consequents, then the displeasure of God; that here com-

mences the first resolutions of leaving the sin, and trying if in the service of God his spirit and the whole appetite of man may be better entertained. He that is thus far entered shall quickly perceive the difference, and meets arguments enough to invite him farther: for then God treats the man as he treated the spies that went to discover the land of promise; he ordered the year in plenty, and directed them to a pleasant and a fruitful place, and prepared bunches of grapes of a miraculous and prodigious greatness, that they might report good things of Canaan, and invite the whole nation to attempt its conquest: so God's grace represents to the new converts, and the weak ones in faith, the pleasures and first deliciousnesses of religion; and when they come to spy the good things of that way that leads to heaven, they presently perceive themselves eased of the load of an evil conscience, of their fears of death, of the confusion of their shame, and God's Spirit gives them a cup of sensible comfort, and makes them to rejoice in their prayers, and weep with pleasures mingled with innocent passion and religious changes. And although God does not deal with all men in the same method, or in manners that can regularly be described, and all men do not feel, or do not observe, or cannot for want of skill discern, such accidental sweetnesses and pleasant grapes at their first entrance into religion; yet God to every man does minister excellent arguments of invitation, and such that if a man will attend to them, they will certainly move either his affections or his will, his fancy or his reason, and most commonly both. But while the

Spirit of God is doing this work in man, man must also be *σύνεργος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, “a fellow-worker with God;” he must entertain the Spirit, attend his inspirations, receive his whispers, obey all his motions, invite him farther, and truly renounce all confederacy with his enemy, sin; at no hand suffering any “root of bitterness” to spring up, not allowing to himself any reserve of carnal pleasure, no clancular lust, no private oppressions, no secret covetousness, no love to this world that may discompose his duty. For if a man prays all day, and at night is intemperate; if he spends his time in reading, and his recreation be sinful; if he studies religion, and practises self-interest; if he leaves his swearing, and yet retains his pride; if he becomes chaste, and yet remains peevish and imperious; this man is not changed from the state of sin into the first stage of the state of grace, he does at no hand belong to God; he hath suffered himself to be scared from one sin, and tempted from another by interest, and hath left a third by reason of his inclination, and a fourth for shame, or want of opportunity; but the Spirit of God hath not yet planted one perfect plant there: God may make use of the accidentally prepared advantages; but as yet the Spirit of God hath not begun the proper and direct work of grace in his heart. But when we leave every sin, when we resolve never to return to the chains, when we have no love for the world but such as may be a servant of God; then I account that we are entered into a state of grace, from whence I am now to begin to reckon the commencement of this pre-

cept, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. And now the first part of this duty is, to make religion to be the business of our lives; for this is the great instrument which will naturally produce our growth in grace, and the perfection of a Christian. For a man cannot, after a state of sin, be instantly a saint; the work of heaven is not done by a flash of lightning, or a dash of affectionate rain, or a few tears of a relenting pity: God and his Church have appointed holy intervals, and have taken portions of our time for religion, that we may be called off from the world, and remember the end of our creation, and do honour to God, and think of heaven with hearty purposes and peremptory designs to get thither. But as we must not neglect those times which God hath reserved for his service, or the Church hath prudently decreed, nor yet act religion upon such days with forms and outsides, or to comply with customs, or to seem religious; so we must take care that all the other portions of our time be hallowed with little retirements of our thoughts and short conversations with God, and all along be guided with holy intention, that even our works of nature may pass into the relations of grace, and the actions of our calling may help towards the obtaining "the prize of our high calling;" while our eatings are actions of temperance, our labours are profitable, our humiliations are acts of obedience, and our alms of *charity*, and our marriages are chaste; and whether we *eat or drink, sleep or wake*, we may do all to the glory of God, by a direct intuition or by a reflex act, by

design or by supplement, by foresight or by an after election. And to this purpose we must not look upon religion as our trouble and our hindrance, nor think alms chargeable or expensive, nor our fastings vexatious and burdensome, nor our prayers a weariness of spirit; but we must make these, and all other the duties of religion, our employment, our care, the work and end for which we came into the world; and remember that we never do the work of men, nor serve the ends of God, nor are in the proper employment and business of our life, but when we worship God, or live like wise or sober persons, or do benefit to our brother.

I will not turn this discourse into a reproof, but leave it represented as a duty. Remember that God sent you into the world for religion; we are but to pass through our pleasant fields or our hard labours, but to lodge a little while in our fair palaces or our meaner cottages, but to bait in the way at our full tables or with our spare diet; but then only man does his proper employment when he prays, and does charity, and mortifies his unruly appetites, and restrains his violent passions, and becomes like to God, and imitates his holy Son, and writes after the copies of apostles and saints. Then he is dressing himself for eternity, where he must dwell or abide, either in an excellent beatifical country, or in a prison of amazement and eternal horror. And after all this you may, if you please, call to mind how much time you allow to God and to your souls every day, or every month, or in a year if you please; for I fear the account of the time is soon made, but the account for the neglect will be

harder. And it will not easily be answered that all our days and years are little enough to attend perishing things, and to be swallowed up in avaricious and vain attendances, and we shall not attend to religion with a zeal so great as is our revenge, or as is the hunger of one meal. Without much time, and a wary life, and a diligent circumspection, we cannot mortify our sins, or do the first works of grace. I pray God we be not found to have grown like the sinews of old age, from strength to remissness, from thence to dissolution, and infirmity, and death. Menedemus was wont to say, that the young boys that went to Athens the first year were wise men, the second year philosophers, the third orators, and the fourth were but plebeians, and understood nothing but their own ignorance. And just so it happens to some in the progresses of religion. At first they are violent and active, and then they satiate all the appetites of religion; and that which is left is, that they were soon weary, and sat down in displeasure, and return to the world, and dwell in the business of pride or money; and by this time they understand that their religion is declined, and passed from the heats and follies of youth to the coldness and infirmities of old age: the remedy of which is only a diligent spirit and a busy religion, a great industry and a full portion of time in holy offices; that as the oracle said to the Cirrhæans, *noctes diesque belligerandum*, they could not be happy unless they waged war night and day; so, unless we perpetually fight against our own vices, and repel our ghostly enemies, and stand upon our guard, we must stand for

ever in the state of babes in Christ, or else return to the first imperfections of an unchristened soul, and an unsanctified spirit. That is the first particular.

2. The second step of our growth in grace is, when virtues grow habitual, apt and easy in our manners and dispositions. For although many new converts have a great zeal and a busy spirit, apt enough (as they think) to contest against all the difficulties of a spiritual life, yet they meet with such powerful oppositions from without, and a false heart within, that their first heats are soon broken, and either they are for ever discouraged, or are forced to march more slowly, and proceed more temperately for ever after.

Τὴν μέντοι κακότητα καὶ ἱλαδὸν ἐστὶν ἐλέσθαι
Ῥηϊδίως, ὀλίγη μὲν ὁδὸς, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει.

It is an easy thing to commit any wickedness, for temptation and infirmity are always too near us. But God hath made care and sweat, prudence and diligence, experience and watchfulness, wisdom and labour at home, and good guides abroad, to be instruments and means to purchase virtue.

The way is long and difficult at first, but in the progress and pursuit we find all the knots made plain, and the rough ways made smooth.

“ ——— jam monte potitus

Ridet.”

Now the spirit of grace is like a new soul within him, and he hath new appetites and new pleasures, when the things of the world grow unsavoury, and the things of religion are delicious; when his temptations to his old crimes return but seldom, and prevail not at

all, or in very inconsiderable instances, and stay not at all, but are reproached with a penitential sorrow and speedy amendment; when we do actions of virtue quickly, frequently, and with delight; then we have grown in grace in the same degree in which they can perceive these excellent dispositions. Some persons there are who dare not sin; they dare not omit their hours of prayer, and they are restless in their spirits till they have done; but they go to it as to execution; they stay from it as long as they can, and they drive like Pharaoh's chariots with the wheels off, sadly and heavily: and besides that, such persons have reserved to themselves the best part of their sacrifice, and do not give their will to God, they do not love him with all their heart; they are also soonest tempted to retire and fall off. Sextius Romanus resigned the honours and offices of the city, and betook himself to the severity of a philosophical life; but when his unusual diet and hard labour began to pinch his flesh, and he felt his propositions smart, and that which was fine in discourse at a symposiac or academical dinner began to sit uneasily upon him in the practice, he so despaired, that he had like to have cast himself into the sea, to appease the labours of his religion; because he never had gone farther than to think it a fine thing to be a wise man: he would commend it, but he was loth to pay for it at the price that God and the philosopher set upon it. But he that is grown in grace, and hath made religion habitual to his spirit, is not at ease but when he is doing the works of the new man; he rests in religion, and comforts his sorrows with thinking of his prayers;

and in all crosses of the world he is patient, because his joy is at hand to refresh him when he list, for he cares not so he may serve God: and if you make him poor here, he is rich there; and he counts that to be his proper service, his work, his recreation, and reward.

3. But, because in the course of holy living, although the duty be regular and constant, yet the sensible relishes and the flowerings of affections, the zeal and the visible expressions, do not always make the same emission; but sometimes by design, sometimes by order, and sometimes by affection, we are more busy, more entire, and more intent upon the actions of religion; in such cases we are to judge of our growth in grace, if after every interval of extraordinary piety the next return be more devout and more affectionate, the labour be more cheerful and more active, and if religion returns oftener, and stays longer in the same expressions, and leaves more satisfaction upon the spirit. Are your communions more frequent? and, when they are, do ye approach nearer to God? Have you made firmer resolutions, and entertained more hearty purposes of amendment? Do you love God more dutifully, and your neighbour with greater charity? Do you not so easily return to the world as formerly? Are not you glad when the thing is done? Do you go to your secular accounts with a more weaned affection than before? If you communicate well, it is certain that you will still do it better; if you do not communicate well, every opportunity of doing it is but a new trouble, easily excused, readily omitted, done because it is neces-

sary, but not because we love it; and we shall find that such persons in their old age do it worst of all. And it was observed by a Spanish confessor, who was also a famous preacher, that, in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made upon their death-bed were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition, than all that he had observed them to make in many years before. For so the canes of Egypt, when they newly arise from their bed of mud and slime of Nilus, start up into an equal and continual length, and are interrupted but with few knots, and are strong and beauteous with great distances and intervals; but when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramis, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body: so are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace: at first, when he springs up from his impurity, by the waters of baptism and repentance, he grows straight and strong, and suffers but few interruptions of piety; and his constant courses of religion are but rarely intermitted, till they ascend up to a full age, or towards the ends of their life; then they are weak, and their devotions often intermitted, and their breaches are frequent, and they seek excuses, and labour for dispensations, and love God and religion less and less, till their old age, instead of a crown of their virtue and perseverance, ends in levity and unprofitable courses; light and useless as the tufted feathers upon the cane, every wind can play with it and abuse it, but no man can make it useful. When, therefore, our piety interrupts its greater and more solemn expres-

sions, and upon the return of the greater offices and bigger solemnities we find them to come upon our spirits like the wave of a tide, which retired only because it was natural so to do, and yet came farther upon the strand at the next rolling; when every new confession, every succeeding communion, every time of separation for more solemn and intense prayer is better spent and more affectionate, leaving a greater relish upon the spirit, and possessing greater portions of our affections, our reason and our choice; then we may give God thanks, who hath given us more grace to use that grace, and a blessing to endeavour our duty, and a blessing upon our endeavour.

4. To discern our growth in grace, we must inquire concerning our passions, whether they be mortified and quiet, complying with our ends of virtue, and under command. For, since the passions are the matter of virtue and vice respectively, he that hath brought into his power all the strengths of the enemy, and the forts from whence he did infest him, he only hath secured his holy walking with God. But because this thing is never perfectly done, and yet must always be doing, grace grows according as we have finished our portions of this work. And in this we must not only inquire concerning our passions, whether they be sinful and habitually prevalent, (for if they be, we are not in the state of grace;) but whether they return upon us in violences and indecencies, in transportation, and unreasonable and imprudent expressions; for although a good man may be incident to a violent passion, and that without sin, yet a perfect man is not; a well-grown

Christian hath seldom such sufferings: to suffer such things sometimes may stand with the being of virtue, but not with its security; for if passions range up and down, and transport us frequently and violently, we may keep in our forts and in our dwellings, but our enemy is master of the field, and our virtues are restrained, and apt to be starved, and will not hold out long. A good man may be spotted with a violence, but a wise man will not; and he that does not add wisdom to his virtue, the knowledge of Jesus Christ to his virtuous habits, will be a good man but till a storm come. But, beyond this, inquire after the state of your passions in actions of religion. Some men fast to mortify their lust, and their fasting makes them peevish; some reprove a vice, but they do it with much impatience; some charitably give excellent counsel, but they do that also with a pompous and proud spirit: and passion, being driven from open hostilities, is forced to march along in the retinue and troops of virtue. And although this be rather a deception and a cozenage than an imperfection, and supposes a state of sin rather than an imperfect grace, yet, because it tacitly and secretly creeps along among the circumstances of pious actions, as it spoils a virtue in some, so it lessens it in others, and therefore, is considerable, also, in this question.

And although no man must take accounts of his being in or out of the state of grace by his being dispassionate, and free from all the assaults of passion; yet, as to the securing his being in the state of grace, he must provide that he be not a slave of passion; so,

to declare his growth in grace, he must be sure to take the measures of his affections, and see that they be lessened, more apt to be suppressed, not breaking out to inconvenience and imprudencies, not rifling our spirit, and drawing us from our usual and more sober tempers. Try, therefore, if your fear be turned into caution, your lusts into chaste friendships, your imperious spirit into prudent government, your revenge into justice, your anger into charity, and your peevishness and rage into silence and suppression of language. Is our ambition changed into virtuous and noble thoughts? Can we emulate without envy? Is our covetousness lessened into good husbandry, and mingled with alms, that we may certainly discern the love of money to be gone? Do we leave to despise our inferiors? and can we willingly endure to admit him that excels us in any gift or grace whatsoever, and to commend it without abatement, and mingling allays with the commendation, and disparagements to the man? If we be arrived but thus far, it is well, and we must go farther. But we use to think that all disaffections of the body are removed, if they be changed into the more tolerable, although we have not an athletic health, or the strength of porters or wrestlers. For although it be felicity to be quit of all passion that may be sinful or violent, and part of the happiness of heaven shall consist in that freedom; yet our growth in grace consists in the remission and lessening of our passions: only he that is incontinent in his lust, or in his anger, in his desires of money or of honour, in his revenge or in his fear, in his joys or in his sorrows;

that man is not grown at all “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This only: in the scrutiny and consequent judgment concerning our passions, it will concern the curiosity of our care to watch against passions in the reflex act, against pride, or lust, complacency, and peevishness attending upon virtue. For he was noted for a vain person, who, being overjoyed for the cure of his pride, as he thought, cried out to his wife, *Cerne, Dionysia, deposui fastum*, “Behold, I have laid aside all my pride:” and of that very dream the silly man thought he had reason to boast; but considered not that it was an act of pride, and levity besides. If thou hast given a noble present to thy friend; if thou hast rejected the unjust desire of thy prince; if thou hast endured thirst and hunger for religion or continence; if thou hast refused an offer like that which was made to Joseph; sit down and rest in thy good conscience, and do not please thyself in opinions and fantastic noises abroad, and do not despise him that did not do so as thou hast done, and reprove no man with an upbraiding circumstance; for it will give thee but an ill return and a contemptible reward, if thou shalt overlay thy infant virtue, or drown it with a flood of breast-milk.

ON FAITH.

[ISAAC BARROW, D.D.]

OF THE VIRTUE AND REASONABLENESS OF FAITH.

2 Pet. i. 1.

To them that have obtained like precious faith with us.

OF all Christian virtues, as there is none more approved and dignified by God, so there is none less considered or valued by men, than faith. The adversaries of our religion have always had a special pique at it; wondering that it should be commanded, as if it were an arbitrary thing, or in our choice to believe what we please; why it should be commended, as if it were praiseworthy to be subdued by reason; either by that which is too strong for us to resist, or by that which is too weak to conquer us.

But that faith worthily deserveth the praises and privileges assigned thereto, we may be satisfied, if we do well consider its nature and ingredients, its causes and rise, its effects and consequences.

In its nature it doth involve knowledge, or the possession of truth, which is the natural food, the proper wealth, the special ornament of our soul; knowledge of truths most worthy of us and important to us, as

conversing about the highest objects and conducing to the noblest use ; knowledge peculiar and not otherwise attainable, as lying without the sphere of our sense, and beyond the reach of our reason ; knowledge conveyed to us with great evidence and assurance ; the greatest indeed that well can be, considering the nature of its objects, and the general capacities of men, and the most proper way of working upon reasonable natures.

It implieth (that which giveth to every virtue its form and worth) a good use of our reason, in carefully weighing and uprightly judging about things of greatest concernment to us ; it implieth a closing with God's providence dispensing opportunities, and representing motives serving to beget it ; a compliance with God's grace attracting and inclining our souls to embrace his heavenly truth ; it implieth also good opinions of God, and good affections toward him, which are requisite to the believing (upon his testimony, promise, or command) points very sublime, very difficult, very cross to our fancy and humour.

The causes, also, which concur in its production, are very excellent ; many virtuous dispositions of soul are requisite to the conception and birth of it : there must be a sober, composed, and wakeful mind, inquisitive after truth, apt to observe it starting, and ready to lay hold on it ; there must be diligence and industry in attending to the proposals and considering the enforcements of it ; there must be sincerity and soundness of judgment, in avowing its cause, against the exceptions *raised against it* by prejudice and carnal conceit, by *sensual* appetites and passions, by temptation and

worldly interest; there must be great humility, disposing us to a submission of our understanding and a resignation of our will unto God, in admitting notions which debase haughty conceit, in espousing duties which repress sturdy humour; there must be much resolution and courage, in undertaking things very difficult, hazardous, and painful; much patience, in adhering to a profession which exacteth so much pain, and exposeth to so much trouble; there must be great prudence in applying our choice (among so many competitions and pretences claiming it) to that which is only good, in seeing through fallacious disguises and looking over present appearances, so as to descry the just worth and the final consequences of things: there must, in fine, be a love of truth, and a liking of all virtue, which is so highly commended and so strictly prescribed by the Christian doctrine.

These particulars, commending faith to us, I have already largely prosecuted; I shall only therefore now insist upon the last head, concerning its effects, whereby (as the goodness of a tree is known by its fruits) the great excellency thereof will appear.

Its effects are of two sorts; one springing naturally from it, the other following it in way of recompence from divine bounty. I shall only touch the first sort; because in this its virtue is most seen, as in the other its felicity.

Faith is naturally efficacious in producing many rare fruits: naturally, I say, not meaning to exclude supernatural grace, *but supposing* faith to be a fit instrument thereof; for God “worketh in us to will, and to

do," but in a way suitable to our nature, employing such means as properly serve to incline and excite us unto good practice ; and such is faith^a, supported and wielded by his grace ; for, indeed, —

Even in common life, faith is the compass by which men steer their practice, and the mainspring of action, setting all the wheels of our activity on going ; every man acteth with serious intention and with vigour answerable to his persuasion of things, that they are worthy his pains, and attainable by his endeavours. What moveth the husbandman to employ so much care, toil, and expense in manuring his ground, in plowing, in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it, but a persuasion that he shall reap a crop, which in benefit will answer all ? What stirreth up the merchant to undertake tedious voyages over vast and dangerous seas, adventuring his stock, abandoning his ease, exposing his life to the waves, to rocks, and shelves, to storms and hurricanes, to cruel pirates, to sweltry heats and piercing colds, but a persuasion that wealth is a very desirable thing, and that hereby he may acquire it ? What induceth a man to conform unto strictest rules of diet and abstinence, readily to swallow down the most unsavoury potions, patiently to endure cuttings and burnings, but a faith that he thereby shall recover or preserve health, that highly valuable good ? From the same principle are all the carking, all the plodding, all the drudging, all the daring, all the scuffling in the world easily derivable. In like manner is faith the square and the *source of our spiritual activity*, disposing us seriously

^a Acts, xi. 24.

to undertake; earnestly, resolutely, industriously, and constantly to pursue the designs of virtue and piety; brooking the pains and hardships, breaking through the difficulties and hazards, which occur in religious practice; engaging us to the performance of duty, deterring us from the commission of sin.

What but faith, "eyeing the prize," will quicken us to "run patiently the race that is set before us?"^a What but faith, apprehending "the crown," will animate us to "fight stoutly the good fight?"^b What but faith, assuring the wages, will support us in working all the day with unwearied industry and patience? What can raise pious hope, what can kindle holy desire, what can spur on conscientious endeavour, but a faith of attaining worthy recompences for doing well? What can impress an effectual dislike and dread of offending, but a faith of incurring grievous punishment and sad mischiefs thence?

In reason, a strong and steady belief but of one point or two would suffice to engage us upon all duty, and to restrain us from all sin. Did we only believe the future judgment, with the results of it, that alone would be an effectual both spur and curb to us: for who, believing that his soul then shall be laid bare, that his inmost thoughts and secretest purposes shall be disclosed unto the view of all the world, will presume to harbour in his breast any foul thought or base design? Who, believing that he shall then be obliged to render an account of every idle word, will dare to utter villanous blasphemies, wicked curses, fond oaths, pro-

^a *Heb. xii. 1. Phil. iii. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.*

^b *2 Tim. iv. 7. 1 Tim. i. 8. ; vi. 7.*

fane jests, vile slanders or detractions, harsh censures or bitter reproaches? Who, being persuaded that a rigorous amends will then be exacted from him for any wrong he doeth, will not be afraid with violence to oppress, or with fraud to circumvent his neighbour? Who, deeming himself accountable then for every talent and opportunity, will find in his heart to squander away or misemploy his time, his power, his wealth, his credit, his wit, his knowledge, his advantages in any kind of doing God service? Who, knowing himself obnoxious to a sudden trial, whereat his estate, his reputation, his life, all his interest and welfare, must lie at stake, will contentedly lose his mind in wanton sports or wild frolics? In fine, if we are really persuaded, that presently after this short and transitory life, we shall openly, in the face of God, angels, and men, be arraigned at an impartial bar, where all our thoughts, our words, our actions shall most exactly be sifted and scanned; according to which cognizance a just doom shall be pronounced, and certainly executed upon us; how must this needs engage us to be very sober and serious, very circumspect and vigilant over our mind, our tongue, our dealings, our conversation, our whole life!

Again, if a man firmly believeth that by a pious course of life he shall gain the present favour and friendship of the Almighty, with all the real goods whereof he is capable; and that hereafter he shall be rewarded for it with an eternal life in perfect rest, in *glory, in joy, in beatitude unspeakable*; that he shall obtain “*an incorruptible inheritance*,” “*a treasure*

that can never fail^a," a crown that will not fade^b," " a kingdom that cannot be shaken^c;" wherein he shall enjoy the blissful vision of God, smiling in love upon him; the presence of his gracious Redeemer, embracing him with dear affection; the most delightful society of blessed angels, and "just spirits made perfect^d;" a state of felicity, surpassing all words to express it, all thoughts to conceive it; of which the brightest splendours and the choicest pleasures here can yield but a faint resemblance;—how can he forbear earnestly to embrace and pursue such a course of practice! What zeal must such a persuasion inspire! What vigour must it rouse within him! Who, upon any terms, would forfeit the hopes of such a happiness? Who would not be glad to undertake any pains, or endure any hardships for it?

And who likewise heartily is persuaded that by vicious conversation he shall incur the wrath of Almighty God, and stand obnoxious to the strokes of his severe justice^e; that, persisting therein, he infallibly must drop into the bottomless pit, into that utter darkness, that furnace of fire unquenchable, that lake of flaming brimstone, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the immortal worm shall gnaw on his heart, and he must feel the pangs of a never-dying death; that state of most bitter remorse, of most horrid despair, of most forlorn disconsolateness, of continual and endless tor-

^a Luke, xii. 33.

^b 1 Pet. v. 4.

^c Heb. xii. 28.

^d 1 Cor. ii. 9.

^e Matt. xviii. 30. Jude, 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Luke, iv. 31. Rev. xx. 3. Matt. viii. 12.; xiii. 42. 50. Mark, ix. 43. 45. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Rev. xx. 21. Matt. ix. 44. Rev. xx. 10. Dan. xii. 2., "Everlasting shame." 2 Thess. i. 9. Rom. ii. 9., *στυγερὰ*.

ment, wherein he shall be banished from the face of God, and by immutable destiny barred from all light, all ease, all solace, from any glimpse of hope, from any respite of pain; the wretchedness of which condition not the sharpest pain of body, not the sorest anguish of mind, not the saddest distress here, can anywise reach or represent; whoever, I say, is possessed with a belief of these things consequent on a wicked life, will he not thence be effectually scared from it? What bait of temptation shall allure him, what force shall drive him thereto? Will he, for a flash of pleasure, for a puff of fame, for a lump of pelf; will he, in compliment or complaisance to others, in apish imitation or compliance with a fashion, out of mere wantonness or in regard to some petty interest; will he, in hope of any worldly good, or fear of any inconvenience here, suffer himself to be cast into that dismal state? Will he not sooner go and shake a lion by the paw, sooner provoke an adder to bite him, sooner throw himself down a precipice, or leap into a caldron of burning pitch? Certainly, in reason, to believe such things, and to sin, can hardly be consistent.

Such a general influence is faith, looking with a provident eye upon future rewards and consequences of things, apt to have upon our practice: the which collaterally taking in the glorious attributes of God, the gracious performances of our Saviour, the beauty and sweetness of each divine precept, the manifold obligations and encouragements to duty, the whole latitude and harmony of evangelical truth, all tending to the recommendation of holiness, what efficacy must it needs

have! how powerfully must it incite us to good practice!

We are told that faith doth “purify our souls^a,” and “cleanse our hearts^b ;” that is, our whole interior man, all the faculties of our soul; disposing them to an universal obedience and conformity to God’s holy will. And so it is; for faith not only doth clear our understanding from its defects, (blindness, ignorance, error, doubt,) but it cleanseth our will from its vicious inclinations, (from stubborn, froward, wanton, giddy humours;) it freeth our affections from disorder and distemper, in tendency toward bad objects, and in pursuit of indifferent things with immoderate violence; it purgeth our conscience, or reflexive powers, from anxious fear, suspicion, anguish, dejection, despair, and all such passions which corrode and fret the soul. How it effecteth this we might declare; but we cannot better set forth its efficacy and puissance, than by considering the special and immediate influence it plainly hath in the production of each virtue, or on the performance of every duty. “Add to your faith virtue^c,” saith St. Peter; implying the natural order of things, and that if true faith precede, virtue will easily follow.

The chief of all virtues, piety, (comprising the love of God, fear and reverence of him, confidence in him, gratitude for his favours and mercies, devotion toward him, a disposition to worship and serve him,) seemeth, according to reason, inevitably consequent from it; for can we believe God superexcellent in all perfection,

^a Ἀγνίζει ψυχὰς

^b 1 Pet. i. 22., καθαρίζει καρδίας.

Acts, xv. 9.

^c 2 Pet. i. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

and immensely benign toward us; can we be persuaded that in free goodness he did create us, and doth continually preserve us in being; that his bounty hath conferred on us all our endowments of soul, and all our accommodations of life; that he hath a tender desire of our welfare, from which even our most heinous offences and provocations cannot divert him; that he most wonderfully hath provided for our happiness; in order thereto, when we had rebelled and revolted from him, sending down out of his bosom, from the top of celestial glory and bliss, his only dear Son, into this base and frail state, to sustain the infirmities of our nature, the inconveniences of a poor life, the pains of a bitter and shameful death, for our recovery from sin and misery; that with infinite patience he driveth on this gracious design, continually watching over us, attracting us to good, and reclaiming us from evil by his grace, notwithstanding our frequent and stiff reluctances thereto:—can, I say, we heartily believe these points, and not love him? Can the eye of faith behold so lovely beauty, so ravishing sweetness in him, and the heart be not affected? Can we apprehend so many miracles of nature, of providence, of grace, performed by him for our sake, and not be thankful to him? Can we, likewise, believe God infinitely powerful, infinitely just, infinitely pure, and withal not dread him, not adore him? Can we believe him most able, most willing, most ready to do us good, and not confide in him? or can we take him to be most veracious, most faithful, most constant, and not rely on his promises? Can we avow him to be our Maker, our Patron, our Lord, our

Judge, and not deem ourselves much obliged, much concerned to serve him? Can we believe that God in our need is accessible, that he calleth and inviteth us to him, that he is ever willing and ever ready to hear us, that he is by promise engaged to grant us whatever we do with humble fervency and constancy request; yet forbear to pray, or easily desist from it? Do we believe his omnipresence and omniscience; that he is with us wherever we go, doth know all we think, hear all we say, see all we do; and will not belief engage us to think honestly, to speak reverently, to act innocently and decently before him? Do we believe that God's commands do proceed from that will, to which rectitude is essential; from that wisdom, which infallibly discerneth what is just and fit; from that goodness, which will require from us nothing but what is best for us; from that unquestionable and uncontrollable authority, to which all things are subject, and must submit? Will not this sufficiently engage us to obedience? Surely the real belief (such as we have about common things, apprehended by our reason or by our sense) of any such divine act or attribute, cannot fail to strike pious affection and pious awe into us.

After piety, the next great virtue is charity, the which also is easily derived "from a pure heart," as St. Paul speaketh, "and faith unfeigned^a:" it representing peculiar obligations and inducements thereto, from the most peremptory commands of God, from the signal recompences annexed to that duty, from the strict relations between Christians, from the stupendous patterns of charity set before us. Who can withhold love from

^a 2 Tim. i. 15.

him, whom he believeth his brother, in a way far nobler than that of nature, so constituted by God himself, the common father, by spiritual regeneration, and adoption of grace ; whom he believeth born of the same heavenly seed, renewed after the same divine image, quickened by the same Holy Spirit ; united to him not only in blood, but in soul ; resembling him not in temper of body or lineaments of face, but in conformity of judgment and practice ; partner of the one inheritance, and destined to lead a life with him through all eternity, in peaceful consortship of joy and bliss ? Who can deny him love, whom he believeth out of the same miserable case by the same price redeemed into the same state of mercy ? for whom he by faith vieweth the common Saviour divesting himself of glory, pinching himself with want, wearing himself with labour, loaded with contumelies, groaning under pain, weltering in blood, and breathing out his soul, propounding all this as an example of our charity, and demanding it from us as the most special instance of our grateful obedience to him ? What greater endearments can be imagined, what more potent incentives of love, what more indissoluble bands of friendship, than are these ? Can such a believer forbear to wish his neighbour well, to have complacence in his good, to sympathise with his adversities, to perform all offices of kindness to him ? Can he, in the need of his brother, “ shut up his bowels of compassion,” or withhold his hand from relieving him ? Can a man know that God requireth this practice as the noblest fruit of our faith, and most acceptable part of our obedience, which he

hath promised to crown with most ample rewards? can he believe that God will recompense his “labour of love” with everlasting rest, and for a small expense of present goods will bestow immense treasures in the other world, and yet abstain from charitable beneficence? Who can forbear sowing, that believeth he shall reap so plentiful a crop; or abstain from dealing in that heavenly trade, whereby he is assured to be so vast a gainer?

In like manner is faith productive of meekness, in comporting with injuries, discourtesies, neglects, and provocations of any kind: for who can be fiercely angry, who can entertain any rancorous grudge or displeasure against him, whom he believeth his brother, and that upon so many accounts he is obliged to love him? Who that believeth God hath pardoned him so much, and doth continually bear so many wrongs, so many indignities from him, will not, in conscience and gratitude toward God, and in compliance with so great an example, bear with the infirmities of his neighbour? Who can look upon the pattern of his Saviour, patiently enduring so many grievous affronts, without a disposition to imitate him, and to do the like for his sake? Who, that taketh himself for a child of God, a citizen of heaven, an heir of eternal glory, can be so much concerned in any trivial accident here, can design to have his passion stirred for any worldly respect, as if his honour could be impaired, or his interest suffer diminution by anything said or done here below?

Again: Faith is the mother of sincerity, that comprehensive virtue, which seasoneth all other virtues,

and keepeth them sound: for it assuring us, that an all-seeing eye doth view our heart, doth “encompass our paths^a,” is present to all our closest retirements; that “all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do^b,” how vain must it appear to us anywise to dissemble, or prevaricate, speaking otherwise than we think, acting otherwise than we pretend, seeming otherwise than we are; concealing our real intents, or disguising them under masks of deceitful appearance! If we believe that we shall be judged, not according to the opinions of men concerning us, or our port and garb in this world, but as we are in ourselves, and according to strictest truth; that in the close of things we shall be set forth in our right colours and complexion, all varnish being wiped away; that all our thoughts, words, and deeds shall be exposed to most public censure; that hypocrisy will be a sore aggravation of our sin, and much increase our shame; how can we satisfy ourselves otherwise than in the pure integrity of our heart, and clear uprightness of our dealing?

Likewise the admirable virtue of humility, or sobriety of mind, doth sprout from faith; informing us, that we have nothing of our own to boast of, but that all the good we have, we can do, we may hope for, are debts we owe to God's pure bounty and mercy; prompting us to assume nothing to ourselves, but to ascribe all the honour of our endowments, of our performances, of our advantages unto God; keeping us in continual dependence upon God for the succours of his providence and

^a Psalm, cxxxix. 2.

^b Heb. iv. 13.

is grace ; representing to us our natural weakness, illness, and wretchedness, together with the adventitious defects and disadvantages from our wilful misbehaviour, the unworthiness of our lives, the many heinous sins we have committed, and the grievous punishments we have deserved.

He who by the light of faith doth see that he came naked into the world, heir to nothing but the sad consequences of the original apostacy ; that he is a worm, crawling on earth, feeding on dust, and tending to corruption ; that he liveth only by reprieve from that fatal sentence, “ The day thou sinnest thou shall die ; ” that he was a caitiff wretch, a mere slave to sin, a forlorn captive of hell ; and that all his recovery thence, or capacity of a better state, is wholly due to mercy ; that he subsisteth only upon alms, and hath nothing but his sins and miseries, which he may call his own ; he that believeth these things, what conceit can he have of himself, what confidence in his own worth, what complacency in his estate ?

Faith also doth engage to the virtue of temperance ; discovering not only the duty, but the necessity thereof, in regard to our state, which is a state of continual exercise and strife ; wherefore, as wrestlers with many strong adversaries, as racers for a noble prize, we by good diet and constant labour must keep ourselves in heart, in temper, in breath to perform those combats : according to that of St. Paul ^a, “ Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.”

Again, faith is productive of contentedness in our

^a 1 Cor. ix. 25.

state : for how is it possible that he, who is fully satisfied that God appointeth his station, and allotteth his portion to each one ; that all occurrences depend on his will, and are managed by his providence, should take any thing amiss ; as if it could hap better, than as infinite goodness pleaseth, and infinite wisdom determineth ? How can he, that believeth God most powerful and able, most kind and willing, ever present and ready to help him, be in any case disconsolate, or despair of seasonable relief ? What can discompose him, who knoweth himself, if he pleaseth, immoveably happy ; that his best good is secure from all attacks, and beyond the reach of any misfortune ; that desiring what is best, he cannot fail of his desire ; that (himself excepted) all the world cannot considerably wrong or hurt him ?

He that is assured those precepts^a, “Be careful for nothing ;” “Cast all your burden on God ;” “Be content with such things as ye have ;” were not given to mock and gull us ; that those declarations and promises^b, “There is no want to them that fear God ;” “No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly ;” “There shall no evil happen to the just ;” “The desire of the righteous shall be granted ;” “All things work together for good to them who love God ;” “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,” were seriously made, and will surely be performed, how loose must his mind be from all solicitude and anxiety ! how steady a

^a Matt. vi. 25. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Heb. xiii. 5. Luke, xii. 29.

^b Psalm, xxxiv. 9. ; viii. 11. Prov. xii. 21. ; x. 24. Rom. viii. 28. Matt. vi. 33.

alm, how sweet a serenity will that faith spread over
s soul, in regard to all worldly contingencies !

It will also beget a cheerful tranquillity of mind,
and peace of conscience, in regard to our future state ;
that which St. Paul calleth “all joy,” and “peace in
believing^a ;” which the Apostle to the Hebrews term-
h “the confidence and rejoicing of hope^b ;” of which
t. Peter saith, “Believing, ye rejoice with joy un-
peakable and full of glory^c :” for he that is persuaded
that God (in whose disposal his fortune and felicity
e) is reconciled and kindly affected toward him ; that
e doth concern himself in designing and procuring his
salvation ; that to purchase the means thereof for him,
the Son of God purposely came down, and suffered
death ; that an act of oblivion is passed, and a full remis-
sion of sins exhibited to him, if he will embrace it ; that
now “there is no condemnation to them that are in
Christ Jesus^d ;” and that, “being justified by faith, we
have peace with God^e ;” that blessing is his portion,
and that an eternal heritage of joy is reserved for him,
what ease must he find in his conscience, what comfort
must possess his heart ! How effectually will that of the
prophet be accomplished in him, “Thou wilt keep him
in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because
he trusteth in thee !”^f

Again, it is faith which breedeth the courage, and
upholdeth the patience requisite to support us in our
spiritual course.

It doth inspire courage, prompting to attempt the

^a Rom. xv. 13.

^b Heb. iii. 6. ; ix. 14.

^c 1 Pet. i. 8.

^d Rom. viii. 1.

^e Rom. v. i. Col. i. 5.

^f Isa. xxvi. 3.

bravest enterprises, disposing to prosecute them resolutely, and enabling happily to achieve them: for he that believeth himself in his undertakings backed by Omnipotence, and that, as St. Paul, “he can do all things through Christ strengthening him^a”; what should he fear to set upon, what difficulty should keep him off, what hazard should dismay him? He that knoweth himself, by reason of the succour attending him, infinitely to overmatch all opposition^b, whom should he not dare to encounter? May he not well say with David, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”^c Let all the world, let earth and hell combine to invade him^d, how can that mate his spirit, if he believe they cannot overthrow him, or hurt him, being secured by the invincible protection of him, to whose will all things do bow; in comparison to whom nothing is puissant, beside whom nothing is really formidable; seeing none but he can kill, none can touch the soul?^e

If we be armed with the spiritual panoply^f, having our head covered “with the helmet of salvation,” our heart guarded with “the breast-plate of righteousness,” our “loins girt about with truth,” our “feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace,” all our body sheltered by the impenetrable “shield of faith;” and wielding in our hands by faith the “penetrant two-edged sword of the Spirit; which is the word of

^a Phil. iv. 13.

^b Phil. i. 28. 1 John, iv. 4.

^c Psalm xxvii. 1.; cxviii. 6.

^d Chrys. tom. vii. p. 51. Psalm xlv. 1, 2.

^e Matt. x. 28.

^f Eph. vi. 15. 1 Thess. v. 8. Rom. xiii. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 7.

God^a ;” what assaults may we not sustain, what foes shall we not easily repel ?

The most redoubtable enemy we have is our own “flesh^b,” which, with a mighty force of violent appetites and impetuous passions, is ever struggling with our reason, and warring against our soul ; yet it faith alone dareth to resist, and is able to quell ; opposing to the present delights of sense the hopes of future joy, quashing transitory satisfactions by the fears of endless torment.

The world is another powerful enemy, ever striving, by its corrupt principles, by its bad examples, by its naughty fashions, by its menaces of persecution, damage, and disgrace, by its promises of vain honour, base profit, and foul pleasure, to overthrow and undo us ; but a resolute faith will defeat its attempts ; for “he,” saith St. John^c, “that is born of God, overcometh the world ; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith :” the faith of a better world will defend us from the frowns and the flatteries of this ; the riches, glories, and joys of heaven, thereby presented to our minds, will secure us from being enchanted with the wealth, splendours, and pleasures of earth.

Another fierce adversary is the cursed fiend ; who ever, “like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking to devour us^d,” or, like a treacherous snake, lieth in wait to bite us ; raising panic fears to daunt and affright us ; laying subtle trains of temptation to abuse and seduce us : but

^a Heb. iv. 12.

^b Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 23. 1 Pet. ii. 11.

^c 1 John, v. 4. 2 Pet. i. 4. Eph. iv. 22.

^d 1 Pet. v. 8.

him, by resistance, we may easily put to flight; for, “Resist the devil,” saith St. James^a, “and he will flee from you;” and how we must resist him St. Peter^b telleth us, “Whom resist, steadfast in faith;” and St. Paul also^c, “Above all,” saith he, “taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one:” if we hold forth this glittering shield, it will dazzle his sight, and damp his courage; being not able to endure its lustre, or stand its opposition, he will instantly retire; fearing that, by our victory over his temptations (through reliance on God’s help, and adherence to his truth) our reward shall be heightened, and his torment (the torment of improsperous envy and baffled malice) be increased.

Faith also will arm us with patience to endure whatever events shall be dispensed with alacrity and comfort; lightening the most heavy burdens imposed on us, sweetening the most distasteful occurrences incident to us: for,

He who is persuaded, that by any damage here sustained for conscience toward God, he shall become a huge gainer, “receiving,” as the Gospel promiseth^d, “an hundred fold, and inheriting eternal life,” what will he not gladly lose? ^e Will he not willingly put forth all he hath in this most profitable usury? Will he not, as those Hebrews did, “take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing that he hath in heaven a better and an enduring substance?” ^f

He who believeth, that in regard to any disgrace cast *on him for his virtue*, he shall be honoured by God ^g,

^a James, iv. 7. Eph. iv. 27.

^b 1 Pet. v. 9.

^c Eph. vi. 16.

^d Matt. xix. 29. Luke, xviii. 80.

^e Heb. x. 34. ^f Matt. v. 12.

and crowned with heavenly glory, will he not in a manner be proud and ambitious of such disgrace? will he not, as the Apostles did, “rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ?”^a

He who trusteth, that for a little pains taken in God’s service, he shall receive *πολὺν μισθόν*, “abundant wages^b,” far exceeding the merit of his labour, will he not cheerfully bear any toil or drudgery therein?

He who, with St. Paul^c, “computeth that the light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed;” and that “those light momentary afflictions do work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory^d”; will they not indeed be light unto him? will he not feel them lying on him, as a few straws or feathers?

He who conceiveth our Lord’s word true, that “by losing his life he shall find it^e,” or that death shall become to him a door into a happy immortality, would he not gladly, upon such terms, be “killed all the day long^f,” and “be always delivered unto death for Jesus?”^g

He who by faith is assured, that any disasters befalling him are not inflictions of wrath, but expressions of love toward him, by God in kindness dispensed as trials of his faith^h, as exercises of his virtue, as occa-

^a Acts, v. 41. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

^b Matt. v. 12. Luke, vi. 35. 1 Cor. iii. 8.

^c Rom. viii. 18.

^d 2 Cor. iv. 17.

^e Matt. x. 39. ; xvi. 25. Luke, xvii. 33. Psalm cxxvi. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 13. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 10. Phil. i. 29.

^f Rom. viii. 36.

^g 2 Cor. iv. 11. 1 Cor. iv. 9. Acts, xx. 24. ; xxi. 13.

^h Jam. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 5. Rom. v. 3. Matt. 5. 12.

sions of his acquiring more plentiful rewards, how can he be disgusted at them, or discomposed by them? Why should he not rather accept them as favours, as felicities, with a thankful and joyful heart; “counting it,” as St. James adviseth, “all joy when he falleth into divers temptations?”^a

In fine, it is faith alone which can plant in us that which is the root of all contentedness and all patience; a just indifference and unconcernedness about all things here: it alone can untack our minds and affections from this world, rearing our souls from earth, and fixing them in heaven^b; for if we are persuaded there is a state of life infinitely more desirable than the best condition here, if we believe there are things attainable by us incomparably better than any which this world affordeth, in respect to which all these glories are but smoke, all these riches are but dirt, all these delights are but dreams, all these businesses are but triflings, all these substances are but shadows, how in our minds can we prize, how in our affections can we cleave unto these things? How, then, can we find in our hearts to spend upon them more care or pain than is needful?^c

He that taketh himself here to be out of his element, that he is but “a stranger and sojourner upon earth,” that he “hath here no abiding city^d,” no country, no house, no land, no treasure, no considerable interest, but that he is merely wayfaring, in passage toward his

^a Jam. i. 2. Rom. v. 3. Luke, vi. 23.

^b Col. iii. 1.

^c “Omnia imaginaria in seculo, et nihil veri.” *Tert. de Cor.* c. 13.

^d Ἡ πρώτη ἀρετὴ, καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ τὸ ξένον εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. Chrys. in Heb. xi. 13.

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b Col. iii. 1.
" Tert. de Cor. c. 1.
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true home and heavenly country, the Jerusalem above, whereof he is a citizen, where his grand concerns lie, where he hath reserved for him immoveable possessions and invaluable treasures, where he is designed to enjoy most noble privileges and most illustrious civilities in the court of the great King; how can he have his heart here sticking in this earthly clay, entangled with the petty cares, amused with the sorry entertainments of this life, how can he otherwise than St. Paul, be dead, and crucified to this world? can he withhold his mind from soaring thither in contemplation, and in affection dwelling there, whilst his desires and hopes do all tend, where his joy and felicity are found, where the great objects of his esteem and love do reside?

But you will perhaps interpose and say, " These are indeed fine sayings, but where do such effects appear? Who, I pray, doth practise according to these notions? Where is that gallant to be found who doth woe to great exploits? Where may we discern that height of piety, that tenderness of charity, that meek contentment with injuries and affronts, that clear sincerity, that depth of humility, that strictness of temperance, that perfect contentedness and undisturbed calmness of mind, that stoutness of courage and stiffness of patience, which you talk of as the undoubted issues of faith? Who is the man that with such glee doth hug afflictions, or biddeth adversity so welcome to his habitation? Where dwell they who so little regard this world

^a Gal. vi. 14.; ii. 20. Ἐκεῖ μετεωρίζει τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ πλίσσῃ
tom. v. Or. 55.

much affect the other? Do we not see men run as if they were wild after preferment, wealth, and pleasure? What do they else but scrape and scramble and scuffle for these things? Doth not every man moan the scantness of his lot; doth not every man flinch at any trouble; doth not every one with all his might strive to rid himself of anything disgustful to his sense or fancy? Are not therefore such encomiums of faith mere speculations, or brave rhodomontades of divinity?

The objection, I confess, is a shrewd one; but I must reply to it. You say, "Where are such effects, where are such men?" I ask, then, "Where is faith, where are believers?" Show me the one, and I will show you the other. If such effects do not appear, it is no argument that faith cannot produce them, but a sign that faith is wanting; as if a tree doth not put forth in due season, we conclude the root is dead; if a fountain yield no streams, we suppose it dried up: "Show me," saith St. James, "thy faith by thy works^a;" implying that if good works do not shine forth in the conversation, it is suspicious there is no true faith in the heart; for such faith is not a feeble weening, or a notion swimming in the head, it is not a profession issuing from the mouth, it is not following such a garb, or adhering to such a party; but a persuasion fixed in the heart by good reason, by firm resolution, by lively sense; it is "with the heart," as St. Paul saith, "man believeth unto righteousness^b;" that is the faith we speak of, and to which we ascribe the production of so great and worthy effects. If a man wanteth that, attested by practice suitable, though he know all the points ex-

^a Jam. ii. 18,

^b Rom. x. 8.

actly, though he readily will say amen to every article of the creed, though he wear all the badges of a Christian, though he frequent the congregations, and comply with the forms of our religion, yet is he really an infidel: for is he not an infidel who denieth God? And is he not such a renegado who liveth impiously? He is so in St. Paul's account; for, "They profess," saith he of such persons, "that they know God, but in works they deny him^a;" and, "He is not a Jew," saith the same Apostle (he is not a Christian may we by parity of reason affirm), "who is one outwardly, but he is a Christian who is one inwardly, and faith is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."^b We may attribute to a barren conceit, or to a formal profession, the name of faith, but it is in an equivocal or wide sense; as a dead man is called a man, or a dry stick resting in the earth a tree: for so "faith," saith St. James, "without works is dead^c," — is indeed but a trunk or carcase of faith, resembling it in outward shape, but void of its spirit and life.^d

To our infidelity, therefore, that overspreading vice; to the unsincerity or deadness of our faith, the great defects of our practice are to be imputed: that is the grand source from which impiety doth so overflow. That so few instances of sprightly virtue are visible, may be a sign the time is the same, or very like to that of which our Lord saith, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he indeed find faith upon the earth?"^e

^a Tit. i. 16.^b Rom. ii. 28.^c Jam. ii. 17.^d Jam. ii. 26.^e Luke, xviii. 8.

But if such effects can now rarely be found, yet time hath been, when they were more rife; scarce any time hath been quite destitute of them; every age since the foundation of things may have tokens and trophies to show of faith's victorious efficacy; so many actions as there have been truly great and glorious, so many gallant feats have been achieved by faith. If we survey the lives of the ancient patriarchs, of the prophets, of the apostles, of the martyrs and confessors of true religion, their faith in all their works is most conspicuous.

Faith recommended that excellent sacrifice of Abel^a to divine acceptance, and advanced him to the rank of first martyr for piety.

On the wings of faith did Enoch mount to heaven, snatching the reward due to his faithful, and therefore well-pleasing, obedience.

Faith preserved Noah from two mighty deluges, one of sin, the other of water, overflowing the earth; by it he stemmed the torrent of the one, and rode on the back of the other; it encouraged him to be "a preacher of righteousness^c" against the grain, and a practiser of it against the fashion of the world, not regarding the common hatred and envy which he did incur thereby; it moved him to undertake that great and strange work of building the ark for a sanctuary and seminary of mankind; the type of that spiritual vessel, by embarking into which, through faith, we are saved from utter ruin.

Faith disposed Abraham to forsake his country and *home, his estate, his kindred*, following divine conduct

^a Heb. xi. 4.

^b 2 Pet. ii. 5. Gen. vii. 2.

he knew not whither^a; to wander abroad, and sojourn among barbarous strangers. Faith inclined him, at God's command, to sacrifice his only son, a goodly youth, the flower of his age and hopes, worthily most dear unto him; the son of his old age, and the comfort thereof, given to him by miracle and in special favour the prop of his family, and the heir of promise, whom his seed was to be propagated, and his memory to flourish; him was he ready in obedience with his own hand to slay, quelling nature and his bowels, thwarting his own hopes, defying all semblance of contradiction or clashing between the commands and promises of God.

Faith, through the rudest efforts of envy and malice, through the dismal calamities of exile and slavery, through hideous snares of temptation, through villainous slanders, through loathsome prisons and fetters of iron, all along sustained with admirable moderation and presence of mind, did rear up Joseph to the helm of that great kingdom.

The same inclined Moses to exchange the dignity and delights of a court for a state of vagrancy and servility; it heartened him to outbrave the invincible obstinacy of a mighty prince; it steeled him with patience to conduct for the space of forty years, through a wild desert, a most perverse and mutinous herd of people.

Faith was mother of that renowned patience which exhausted Satan's quiver, spent all his artillery, and wore out his invention in suggesting mischiefs.^b

^a Heb. xi. 8. Chrys. tom. vii. p. 17.

^b Chrys. tom. vii.

know that my Redeemer liveth^a," was the rock on which that unshakable patience of Job was founded.

That pricked the ruddy stripling forward, naked and unarmed, with undaunted heart and countenance, to invade the monster of Gath, that tower of flesh, swelling with rage and pride, and all fenced with brass and steel. "Thou comest to me," said he, "with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts^b:" there lay his confidence, thence sprung his admirable courage.

To this the bold attempts and the glorious victories of Joshua, of Gideon, of Barak, of Jephtha, of Samson, of Jonathan, of the Maccabees, are worthily ascribed, who with small forces, upon great disadvantages, did assault, did vanquish mighty enemies and oppressors.

This inflamed the zeal of Elias, by which he alone did check and control the degenerate follies of his nation^c, surmounting the indignation of princes which favoured them; it fed him in the wilderness by the purveyance of ravens; it framed the wheels of that fiery chariot which transported him into heaven.^d

This made Jeremy, with like zeal and courage, dare to carry most unwelcome news and unpleasant messages to an outrageous people, not daunted by their angry menaces or cruel misusages; "his feet sunk into the mire^e," but faith bore up his heart above all discouragement.

This saved the conscience of those three brave youths clear from that impiety into which barbarous violence

^a Job. xix. 25.

^c 1 Kings, xviii. 36. ; xix. 20.

^e Jer. xxxviii. 4. 6.

^b 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

^d 2 Kings, ii. 11.

would have driven them, so that neither the fury of that great monarch nor his gaping furnace could terrify them into sin; faith putting into their mouths those manful words, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king: but if not, be it known unto thee, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."^a Their faith carried them undaunted into the flames, and kept them untouched within them; so that they became as gold, not wasted, but tried and purified in the furnace.

Neither could a danger no less terrible scare the noble Daniel from his devotions^b; his faith did stop the lions' mouths;" and "he," saith the text, "was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he trusted in his God."

Such exploits of spiritual prowess were achieved by an Old Testament faith, relying upon God's attributes and providence, although wanting a clear revelation of the promises, which then lay wrapped up in mysteries and shadows; but more heretical acts of fortitude and patience did the bright sunshine of grace and glory upon the minds of our apostles and primitive saints produce. Animated by faith, a little troop of them marched out with resolution to attack all the powers of hell, and to beat down the kingdom of darkness; to dispatch all the prejudices and errors of mankind, and to subdue the world to the dominion of

^a Dan. iii. 14, 17. 18.

^b Dan. vi. 22. Dan. vi. 22, 23, 24.

Christ. So armed, successfully did they knock down and trample upon all opposition to their glorious designs; they defeated all the secular power and policy, they baffled all the wit, the learning, the eloquence, which stood in their way or gave them resistance; they triumphed over persecutions, and in regard to all sufferings were more than conquerors.^a To forsake and forfeit all they had was their gain; to have nothing was their wealth; to incur disgraces was their glory; to be in continual labour and travail was their ease; fastings, hunger, and thirst were their pleasure, their feast, their luxury; prisons were chapels to them, in which they preached and prayed, and sang praises to God; their joy was to suffer; to receive stripes, and undergo torments, was their triumph and their glory; they constantly defied, they often courted death.^b

That they were able to perform such prodigious acts, and to endure things so insupportable, was not from a stupid insensibility of things, from a sturdiness of spirit, or stiffness of humour, but from a true magnanimity inspired by faith; because they were persuaded of God's will, because they confided in God's help, because they relied on God's word, because they did expect rewards from God able to satisfy for all their pains and losses; this made them undertake so bold enterprises, and carried them with insuperable constancy through all. Hence were they glad to abandon their ease and pleasure, to prostitute their honour and reputation, to part with their substance, to venture their safety, to sacrifice their lives for God's truth: "Therefore do we

^a Rom. viii. 35. Eph. iii. 13.

^b Acts, xvi. 25.

both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the saviour of all men, specially of those that believe^a,” is the short account which St. Paul rendereth of it; and infallibly the like effects will faith produce wherever it is found, in a degree proportionable to its sincerity and strength.

“A grain of faith,” our Saviour saith^b, “is able to remove mountains;” that is, to accomplish things in appearance very strange and difficult^c: and, “To him that believeth all things are possible^d,” saith the same mouth of truth; and “He,” saith our Lord again^e, “that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater works than these shall he do.” If this be true in reference to works concerning the frame of nature, it is surely no less true in regard to those which lie within the more proper sphere of faith, to moral and spiritual operations. If faith can obtain the help of God enabling to transfer a mountain, it also can procure his grace disposing to restrain an appetite or repress a passion.

Now, that which is in itself so worthy and lovely, which is attended with so good consorts, which is the daughter of so excellent causes, the sister of so great virtues, the parent of so admirable effects, how can it otherwise than be very precious, very laudable, very acceptable? How can we at all wonder that it should be graced with such commendations, and crowned with such rewards?

^a 1 Tim. iv. 10. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11. 1 Pet. i. 7.; iv. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

^b Matt. xvii. 20. ; xxi. 21. Luke, xvii. 6.

^c 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

^d Mark, xi. 23. ; ix. 23.

^e John, xiv. 12. Chrys. tom. 7. Or. 64.

Let us therefore (to conclude) be exhorted, if we do want it, to endeavour the acquist of it by all proper means, — by serious contemplation and study, by prayer to God, by voiding all obstructions of it^a; if we have it, to hold it fast, to cherish it, to improve it, as by all good ways so especially by good practice, that we may produce the good fruits and obtain the happy rewards thereof, through the mercies of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom for ever be all praise.

“ Now the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”^b Amen.

^a Chrys. in Joh. Or. 6.

^b Rom. xv. 13.

ON KEEPING CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS.

[R. CUDWORTH. D.D.]

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT WESTMINSTER,
MARCH 31. 1647.

1 JOHN, ii. 3, 4.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

WE have much inquiry concerning knowledge in these latter times. The sons of Adam are now as busy as ever himself was, about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, shaking the boughs of it, and scrambling for the fruit; whilst, I fear, many are too unmindful of the tree of life. And though there be now no cherubims with their flaming swords, to fright men off from it; yet the way that leads to it seems to be so solitary and untrodden, as if there were but few that had any mind to taste the fruit of it. There be many that speak of new glimpses and discoveries of truth, of dawnings of gospel light; and no question but God hath reserved much of this for the very evening and sun-set of the world; for in the latter days knowledge shall be in-

creased: but yet I wish we could in the meantime see that day to dawn, which the Apostle speaks of, and that “day-star to arise in men’s hearts.” I wish, whilst we talk of light, and dispute about truth, we could walk more as “children of the light.” Whereas, if St. John’s rule be good here in the text, that no man truly knows Christ but he that keepeth his commandments, it is much to be suspected that many of us, who pretend to light, have a thick and gloomy darkness within, overspreading our souls.

There be now many large volumes and discourses written concerning Christ, thousands of controversies discussed, infinite problems determined concerning his divinity, humanity, union of both together, and what not; so that our bookish Christians, that have all their religion in writings and papers, think they are now completely furnished with all kinds of knowledge concerning Christ; and when they see all their leaves lying about them, they think they have a goodly stock of knowledge and truth, and cannot possibly miss of the way to heaven; as if religion were nothing but a little book craft, a mere paper skill.

But if St. John’s rule here be good, we must not judge of our knowing of Christ by our skill in books and papers, but by our keeping of his commandments. And that, I fear, will discover many of us (notwithstanding all this light which we boast of round about us) to have nothing but Egyptian darkness within our hearts.

The vulgar sort think that they know Christ enough out of their creeds, and catechisms, and confessions of faith; and if they have but a little acquainted them-

selves with these, and like parrots conned the words of them, they doubt not but they are sufficiently instructed in all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Many of the more learned, if they can but wrangle and dispute about Christ, imagine themselves to be grown great proficients in the school of Christ.

The greatest part of the world, whether learned or unlearned, think that there is no need of purging and purifying of their hearts for the right knowledge of Christ and his Gospel : but though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul within, yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their treatises and discourses, out of their mere systems and bodies of divinity; which I deny not to be useful in a subordinate way ; although our Saviour prescribes his disciples another method to come to the right knowledge of divine truths, by doing of God's will. "He that will do my Father's will," saith he, "shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." He is a true Christian indeed, not he that is only book-taught, but he that is God-taught ; he that hath "an unction from the Holy One " (as our Apostle calleth it) "that teacheth him all things ;" he that hath the Spirit of Christ within him, that searcheth out the deep things of God : "for as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him ; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

Ink and paper can never make us Christians, can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us ; can never form Christ, or any true notions of spiritual things, in our hearts. The Gospel, that new law which

Christ delivered to the world, it is not merely a "letter" without us, but a "quickeningspirit" within us. Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge, in any heart. All this is but the groping of the poor dark spirit of man after truth, to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. Words and syllables, which are but dead things, cannot possibly convey the living notions of heavenly truths to us. The secret mysteries of a divine life, of a new nature, of Christ formed in our hearts, they cannot be written or spoken; language and expressions cannot reach them; neither can they ever be truly understood, except the soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened into the life of them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, yet he can never paint the scent and fragrancy; or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigram mocks at him: —

“——Si vis similem pingere, pingere sonum.”

All the skill of cunning artizans and mechanics cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to enclose in words and letters the life, soul, and essence of any spiritual truths; and, as it were, to incorporate it in them.

Some philosophers have determined that ἀρετή is not διδακτὸν, virtue cannot be taught by any certain rules or precepts. Men and books may propound some

direction to us that may set us in such a way of life and practice as in which we shall at last find it within ourselves, and be experimentally acquainted with it; but they cannot teach it us like a mechanic art or trade. No, surely, "there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth this understanding." But we shall not meet with this spirit any where but in the way of obedience: the knowledge of Christ, and the keeping of his commandments, must always go together, and be mutual causes of one another.

"Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

I come now unto these words themselves, which are so pregnant, that I shall not need to force out any thing at all from them. I shall therefore only take notice of some few observations which drop from them of their own accord, and then conclude with some application of them to ourselves.

I. First, then, if this be the right way and method of discovering our knowledge of Christ, by our keeping his commandments; then we may safely draw conclusions concerning our state and condition from the conformity of our lives to the will of Christ.

Would we know whether we know Christ aright, let us consider whether the life of Christ be in us. *Qui non habet vitam Christi, Christum non habet.*" He that hath not the life of Christ in him, he hath nothing but the name, nothing but a phantasy of Christ, he hath not the substance of him. He that builds his house upon

this foundation, not an airy notion of Christ swimming in his brain, but Christ really dwelling and living in his heart, as our Saviour himself witnesseth, he “buildeth his house upon a rock ;” and when the floods come, and the winds blow, and the rain descends, and beats upon it, it shall stand impregnably. But he that builds all his comfort upon an ungrounded persuasion that God from all eternity hath loved him, and absolutely decreed him to life and happiness, and seeketh not for God really dwelling in his soul ; he builds his house upon a quicksand, and it shall suddenly sink and be swallowed up : “ His hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a spider’s web : he shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand ; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.”

We are no where commanded to pry into these secrets ; but the wholesome counsel and advice given us is this, “ to make our calling and election sure.” We have no warrant in Scripture to peep into these hidden rolls and volumes of eternity, and to make it our first thing that we do, when we come to Christ, to spell out our names in the stars, and to persuade ourselves that we are certainly elected to everlasting happiness, before we see the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, shaped in our hearts. God’s everlasting decree is too dazzling and bright an object for us at first to set our eye upon. It is far easier and safer for us to look upon the rays of his goodness and holiness, as they are reflected in our own hearts, and there to read the mild and gentle characters of God’s love to us, in our love to him, and our hearty compliance with his heavenly will ;

as it is safer for us, if we would see the sun, to look upon it here below in a pail of water, than to cast up our daring eyes upon the body of the sun itself, which is too radiant and scorching for us. The best assurance that one can have of his interest in God is, doubtless, the conformity of his soul to him. Those divine purposes, whatsoever they be, are altogether unsearchable and unknowable by us: they lie wrapped up in everlasting darkness, and covered in a deep abyss. Who is able to fathom the bottom of them?

Let us not therefore make this our first attempt towards God and religion, to persuade ourselves strongly of these everlasting decrees: for if at our first flight we aim so high, we shall haply but scorch our wings, and be struck back with lightning, as those giants of old were, that would needs attempt to invade and assault heaven. And it is indeed a most gigantical essay, to thrust ourselves so boldly into the lap of heaven; it is the prank of a Nimrod, of a mighty hunter, thus rudely to deal with God, and to force heaven and happiness before his face, whether he will or no. The way to obtain a good assurance indeed of our title to heaven is not to clamber up to it by a ladder of our own ungrounded persuasions, but to dig as low as hell by humility and self-denial in our own hearts: and though this may seem to be the furthest way about, yet it is indeed the nearest and safest way to it. We must *ἀναβαίνειν κάτω*, and *καταβαίνειν ἄνω*, as the Greek epigram speaks, ascend downward, and descend upward; if we would indeed come to heaven, or get any true persuasion of our title to it.

The most gallant and triumphant confidence of a

Christian riseth safely and surely on this low foundation, that lies deep underground, and there stands firmly and steadfastly. When our heart is once turned into a conformity with the word of God; when we feel our will, perfectly to concur with his will; we shall then presently perceive a spirit of adoption within ourselves, teaching us to cry, "Abba, Father!" We shall not then care for peeping into those hidden records of eternity, to see whether our names be written there in golden characters; no, we shall find a copy of God's thoughts concerning us written in our own breasts. There we may read the characters of his favour to us; there we may feel an inward sense of his love to us, flowing out of our hearty and unfeigned love to him. And we shall be more undoubtedly persuaded of it, than if any of those winged watchmen above, that are privy to heaven's secrets, should come and tell us that they saw our names enrolled in those volumes of eternity. Whereas, on the contrary, though we strive to persuade ourselves never so confidently that God from all eternity hath loved us, and elected us to life and happiness; if we do yet, in the mean time, entertain any iniquity within our hearts, and willingly close with any lust; do what we can, we shall find many a cold qualm ever now and then seizing upon us at approaching dangers; and when death itself shall grimly look us in the face, we shall feel our hearts even to die within us, and our spirits quite faint away, though we strive to raise them and recover them never so much, with the strong waters and *aqua vitæ* of our ungrounded presumptions. The least inward lust willingly continued in, will be like a worm,

retting the gourd of our jolly confidence and presumptuous persuasion of God's love, and always gnawing at the root of it; and though we strive to keep it alive, and continually besprinkle it with some dews of our own, yet it will be always dying and withering in our bosoms. But a good conscience within will be always better to a Christian than "health to his navel and marrow to his bones;" it will be an everlasting cordial to his heart; it will be softer to him than a bed of down, and he may sleep securely upon it in the midst of raging and tempestuous seas, when the winds bluster, and the waves beat round about him. A good conscience is the best looking-glass of heaven, in which the soul may see God's thoughts and purposes concerning it, as so many shining stars reflected to it. "Hereby we know that we know Christ, hereby we know that Christ loves us, if we keep his commandments."

II. Secondly: If hereby only we know that we know Christ, by our keeping his commandments; then the knowledge of Christ doth not consist merely in a few barren notions, in a form of certain dry and sapless opinions.

Christ came not into the world to fill our heads with mere speculations, to kindle a fire of wrangling and contentious dispute amongst us, and to warm our spirits against one another with nothing but angry and peevish debates; whilst, in the mean time, our hearts remain all ice within towards God, and have not the least spark of true heavenly fire to melt and thaw them. Christ came not to possess our brains only with some cold opinions, that send down nothing but a freezing

and benumbing influence upon our hearts. Christ was *vita magister*, not *scholæ*; and he is the best Christian whose heart beats with the truest pulse towards heaven, not he whose head spinneth out the finest cobwebs.

He that endeavours really to mortify his lusts, and to comply with that truth in his life, which his conscience is convinced of, is nearer a Christian, though he never heard of Christ, than he that believes all the vulgar articles of the Christian faith, and plainly denieth Christ in his life.

Surely the way to heaven that Christ hath taught us is plain and easy, if we have but honest hearts: we need not many criticisms, many school distinctions, to come to a right understanding of it. Surely Christ came not to ensnare us and entangle us with captious niceties, or to puzzle our heads with deep speculations, and lead us through hard and craggy notions into the kingdom of heaven. I persuade myself that no man shall ever be kept out of heaven for not comprehending mysteries that were beyond the reach of his shallow understanding; if he had but an honest and good heart, that was ready to comply with Christ's commandments. "Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven?" that is, with high speculations to bring down Christ from thence: or, "Who shall descend into the abyss beneath?" that is, with deep searching thoughts to fetch up Christ from thence: but lo, "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart."

But I wish it were not the distemper of our times to scare and fright men only with opinions and make them

only solicitous about the entertaining of this and that speculation, which will not render them anything the better in their lives, or the liker unto God ; whilst in the mean time there is no such care taken about keeping of Christ's commandments, and being renewed in our minds according to the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. We say, " Lo, here is Christ," and, " Lo, there is Christ," in these and these opinions ; whereas, in truth, Christ is neither here, nor there, nor any where, but where the spirit of Christ, where the life of Christ is.

Do we not now-a-days open and lock up heaven with the private key of this and that opinion of our own, according to our several fancies, as we please ? And if any one observe Christ's commandments never so sincerely, and serve God with faith and a pure conscience, that yet haply skills not of some contended-for opinions, some darling notions, he hath not the right *shibboleth* ; he hath not the true watchword ; he must not pass the guards into heaven. Do we not make this and that opinion, this and that outward form, to be the wedding-garment, and boldly sentence those to outer darkness, that are not invested therewith ? Whereas, every true Christian finds the least dram of hearty affection towards God to be more cordial and sovereign to his soul, than all the speculative notions and opinions in the world ; and though he study also to inform his understanding aright, and free his mind from all error and misapprehensions ; yet it is nothing but the life of Christ deeply rooted in his heart, which is the chemical elixir that he feeds upon. Had he " all faith, that he

could remove mountains" (as St. Paul speaks), had he "all knowledge, all tongues and languages;" yet he prizeth one dram of love beyond them all. He accounteth him that feeds upon mere notions in religion to be but an airy and camelion-like Christian. He findeth himself now otherwise rooted and centered in God, than when he did before merely contemplate and gaze upon him; he tasteth and relisheth God within himself; he hath *quendam saporem Dei*, a certain savour of him; whereas before he did but rove and guess at random at him. He feeleth himself safely anchored in God, and will not be dissuaded from it, though perhaps he skill not many of those subtilties, which others make the alpha and omega of their religion. Neither is he scared with those childish affrightments with which some would force their private conceits upon him; he is above the superstitious dreading of mere speculative opinions, as well as the superstitious reverence of outward ceremonies; he cares not so much for subtilty, as for soundness and health of mind. And, indeed, as it was well spoken by a noble philosopher, *ἀνευ ἀρετῆς Θεὸς ὄνομα μόνον*, that without purity and virtue, God is nothing but an empty name; so it is as true here, that without obedience to Christ's commandments, without the life of Christ dwelling in us, whatsoever opinions we entertain of him, Christ is but only named by us, he is not known.

I speak not here against a free and ingenuous inquiry into all truth, according to our several abilities and opportunities; I plead not for the captivating and *enthraling* of our judgments to the dictates of men; I do

not disparage the natural improvement of our understanding faculties by true knowledge, which is so noble and gallant a perfection of the mind: but the thing which I aim against, is the dispiriting of the life and vigour of our religion by dry speculations, and making it nothing but a mere dead skeleton of opinions, a few dry bones, without any flesh and sinews, tied up together; and the misplacing of all our zeal upon an eager prosecution of these, which should be spent to better purpose upon other objects.

Knowledge indeed is a thing far more excellent than riches, outward pleasures, worldly dignities, or any thing else in the world besides holiness, and the conformity of our wills to the will of God; but yet our happiness consisteth not in it, but in a certain divine temper and constitution of soul, which is far above it.

But it is a piece of that corruption that runneth through human nature, that we naturally prize truth more than goodness, knowledge more than holiness. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge and speculation; whereas the highest mystery of a divine life here, and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere obedience to the divine will. Happiness is nothing but that inward sweet delight, that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will.

There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing that fights against him, but self-will. This is the strong castle that we all keep garrisoned *against heaven in every one of our hearts*, which God

continually layeth siege unto; and it must be conquered and demolished, before we can conquer heaven. It was by reason of this self-will that Adam fell in paradise; that those glorious angels, those morning stars, kept not their first station, but dropped down from heaven like falling stars, and sunk into this condition of bitterness, anxiety, and wretchedness, in which now they are. They all entangled themselves with the length of their own wings, they would needs will more and otherwise than God would will in them; and going about to make their wills wider, and to enlarge them into greater amplitude, the more they struggled, they found themselves the faster pinioned, and crowded up into narrowness and servility; inso-much, that now they are not able to use any wings at all, but, inheriting the serpent's curse, can only creep with their bellies upon the earth. Now, our only way to recover God and happiness again is, not to soar up with ours understandings, but to destroy this self-will of ours; and then we shall find our wings to grow again, our plumes fairly spread, and ourselves raised aloft into the free air of perfect liberty, which is perfect happiness.

There is nothing in the whole world able to do us good or hurt, but God and our own will: neither riches nor poverty, nor disgrace nor honour, nor life nor death, nor angels nor devils; but willing or not willing as we ought. Should hell itself cast all its fiery darts against us, if our will be right, if it be informed by the Divine will, they can do us no hurt; we have then (if I may so speak) an enchanted shield, that is impene-

trable, and will bear off all. God will not hurt us, and hell cannot hurt us, if we will nothing but what God wills. Nay, then we are acted by God himself, and the whole Divinity floweth in upon us; and when we have cashiered this self-will of ours, which did but shackle and confine our souls, our wills shall then become truly free, being widened and enlarged to the extent of God's own will. Hereby we know that we know Christ indeed, not by our speculative opinions concerning him, but by our keeping of his commandments.

III. Thirdly: If hereby we are to judge whether we truly know Christ, by our keeping of his commandments, so that he that saith he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar; then this was not the plot and design of the Gospel, to give the world an indulgence to sin, upon what pretence soever.

Though we are too prone to make such misconstructions of it; as if God had intended nothing else in it, but to dandle our corrupt nature, and contrive a smooth and easy way for us to come to happiness, without the toilsome labour of subduing our lusts and sinful affections; or as if the Gospel were nothing else but a declaration to the world of God's engaging his affections from all eternity on some particular persons in such a manner as that he would resolve to love them, and dearly embrace them, though he never made them partakers of his image in righteousness and true holiness; and though they should remain under the power of all their lusts, yet they should still continue his beloved

ones, and he would, notwithstanding, at last, bring them undoubtedly into heaven. Which is nothing else but to make the God that we worship, the God of the New Testament, *προσωπολήπτης*, an acceptor of persons, and one that should encourage that in the world which is diametrically opposite to God's own life and being.

And, indeed, nothing is more ordinary than for us to shape out such monstrous and deformed notions of God unto ourselves, by looking upon him through the coloured medium of our own corrupt hearts, and having the eye of our soul tintured by the suffusions of our own lusts. And therefore, because we mortals can fondly love and hate, and sometimes hug the very vices of those to whom our affections are engaged, and kiss their very deformities; we are so ready to shape out a Deity like unto ourselves, and to fashion out such a God as will, in Christ at least, hug the very wickedness of the world, and in those that be once his own, by I know not what fond affection appropriated to himself, connive at their very sins, so that they shall not make the least breach betwixt himself and them. Truly, I know not whether of the two be the worse idolatry, and of the deeper stain; for a man to make a god out of a piece of wood, and fall down unto it and worship it, and say, "Deliver me, for thou art my God," as it is expressed in the prophet Isaiah; or to set up such an idol-god of our own imagination as this is, fashioned out according to the similitude of *our own fondness and wickedness*: and when we should *paint out God with the liveliest colours that we can*

possibly borrow from any created being, with the purest perfections that we can abstract from them; to draw him out thus with the blackest coal of our own corrupt hearts, and to make the very blots and blurs of our own souls to be the letters which we spell out his name by. Thus do we, that are children of the night, make black and ugly representations of God unto ourselves, as the Ethiopians were wont to do, copying him out according to our own likeness, and setting up that unto ourselves for a God, which we love most dearly in ourselves, that is, our lusts. But there is no such God as this any where in the world, but only in some men's false imaginations, who know not, all this while, that they look upon themselves instead of God, and make an idol of themselves, which they worship and adore for him; being so full of themselves, that whatsoever they see round about them, even God himself, they colour with their own tincture; like him that Aristotle speaks of, that wheresoever he went, and whatsoever he looked upon, he saw still his own face, as in a glass, represented to him. And therefore it is no wonder, if men seem naturally more devoutly affected toward such an imaginary God as we have now described, than to the true real God, clothed with his own proper attributes; since it is nothing but an image of themselves, which, Narcissus-like, they fall in love with; no wonder if they kiss and dandle such a baby-god as this, which, like little children, they have dressed up out of the clouts of their own fond fancies, according to their own likeness, of purpose that they might play and sport with it.

But God will ever dwell in spotless light, howsoever

we paint him and disfigure him here below ; he will still be circled about with his own rays of unstained and immaculate glory. And though the Gospel be not God as he is in his own brightness, but God veiled and masked to us, God in a state of humiliation, and condescent, as the sun in a rainbow ; yet it is nothing else but a clear and unspotted mirror of divine holiness, goodness, purity ; in which attributes lie the very life and essence of God himself. The Gospel is nothing else but God descending into the world in our form, and conversing with us in our likeness ; that he might allure and draw us up to God, and make us partakers of his divine form. Θεὸς γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος (as Athanasius speaks) ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεοποιήσῃ ; God was therefore incarnated and made man, that he might deify us ; that is (as St. Peter expresseth it), make us “ partakers of the divine nature.” Now, I say, the very proper character and essential tincture of God himself is nothing else but goodness. Nay, I may be bold to add, that God is therefore God, because he is the highest and most perfect good ; and good is not therefore good, because God out of an arbitrary will of his would have it so. Whatsoever God doth in the world, he doth it as it is suitable to the highest goodness ; the first idea and fairest copy of which is his own essence.

“ Virtue and holiness in creatures,” as Plato well discourseth, in his Euthyphro, are not therefore good, because God loveth them, and will have them be accounted such ; but rather God therefore loveth them, *because they are in themselves simply good.* Some of our own authors go a little further yet, and tell us, that

God doth not fondly love himself because he is himself, but therefore he loveth himself because he is the highest and most absolute goodness; so that, if there could be any thing in the world better than God, God would love that better than himself: but because he is essentially the most perfect good, therefore he cannot but love his own goodness infinitely above all other things. And it is another mistake, which sometimes we have of God, by shaping him out according to the model of ourselves, when we make him nothing but a blind, dark, impetuous self-will, running through the world: such as we ourselves are furiously acted with, that have not the balance of absolute goodness to poise and settle us.

That I may therefore come nearer to the thing in hand: God, who is absolute goodness, cannot love any of his creatures, and take pleasure in them, without bestowing a communication of his goodness and likeness upon them. God cannot make a gospel to promise men life and happiness hereafter, without being regenerated, and made partakers of his holiness. As soon may heaven and hell be reconciled together, and lovingly shake hands with one another; as God can be fondly indulgent to any sin, in whomsoever it be. As soon may light and darkness be espoused together, and midnight be married to the noonday, as God can be joined in a league of friendship to any wicked soul.

The great design of God in the Gospel is to clear up this mist of sin and corruption, which we are here surrounded with, and to bring up his creatures out of the *shadow of death to the region of light above, the land*

of truth and holiness. The great mystery of the Gospel is to establish a godlike frame and disposition of spirit, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, in the hearts of men. And Christ, who is the great and mighty Saviour, he came on purpose into the world, not only to save us from fire and brimstone, but also to save us from our sins. Christ hath therefore made an expiation of our sins by his death upon the cross, that we, being thus delivered out of the hands of these our greatest enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. This "grace of God, that bringeth salvation," hath therefore "appeared unto all men in the Gospel, that it might teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "These things I write unto you," saith our Apostle a little before my text, "that you sin not;" therein expressing the end of the whole Gospel, which is, not only to cover sin by spreading the purple robe of Christ's death and sufferings over it, whilst it still remaineth in us with all its filth and noisomeness unremoved; but also to convey a powerful and mighty spirit of holiness, to cleanse us and free us from it. And this is a greater grace of God to us than the former, which still go both together *in the Gospel*; besides the free remission and pardon of *in in the blood of Christ*, the delivering of us from the

power of sin, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in our hearts.

Christ came not into the world only to cast a mantle over us, and hide all our filthy sores from God's avenging eye, with his merits and righteousness; but he came likewise to be a surgeon and physician of souls, to free us from the filth and corruption of them; which is more grievous and burdensome, more noisome to a true Christian, than the guilt of sin itself.

Should a poor wretched and diseased creature, that is full of sores and ulcers, be covered all over with purple, or clothed with scarlet, he would take but little contentment in it, whilst his sores and wounds remain upon him; and he had much rather be arrayed in rags, so he might obtain but soundness and health within. The Gospel is a true Bethesda, a pool of grace, where such poor, lame, and infirm creatures as we are, upon the moving of God's Spirit in it, may descend down, not only to wash our skin and outside, but also to be cured of our diseases within. And whatever the world thinks, there is a powerful Spirit, that moves upon these waters, the waters of the Gospel, spreading its gentle, healing, quickening wings over our souls. The Gospel is not like Abana and Pharpar, those common rivers of Damascus, that could only cleanse the outside; but it is a true Jordan, in which such leprous Naamans as we all are, may "wash and be clean." "Blessed indeed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" but yet rather blessed are they whose *sins are like a morning cloud, and quite taken away*

from them. Blessed, thrice “blessed are they, that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied: blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Our Saviour Christ came (as John the Baptist tells us) “with a fan in his hand, that he might thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.” He came (as the prophet Malachi speaks) “like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap; to sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and to purify all the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

Christ came not only to write “Holiness to the Lord” upon Aaron’s forehead, and to put his *urim* and *thummim* upon his breast-plate; but, “This is the covenant, saith the Lord, that I will make with them in those days; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and then I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” They shall be all kings and priests unto me. “God sent his own Son,” saith St. Paul, “in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

The first Adam, as the Scripture tells us, brought in a real defilement, which, like a noisome leprosy, hath overspread all mankind; and therefore the second Adam must not only fill the world with a conceit of holiness, and mere imaginary righteousness; but he must really convey such an immortal seed of grace into the hearts

of true believers as may prevail still more and more in them, till it have at last quite wrought out that poison of the serpent.

Christ, that was nothing but Divinity dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh, and God himself immediately acting a human nature, came into the world to kindle here that divine life amongst men, which is certainly dearer unto God than anything else whatsoever in the world; and to propagate this celestial fire from one heart still unto another, until the end of the world. Neither is he, nor was he, ever absent from this spark of his divinity kindled amongst men, wheresoever it be, though he seem bodily to be withdrawn from us. He is the standing, constant, inexhausted fountain of this divine light and heat; that still toucheth every soul that is enlivened by it, with an outstretched ray, and freely lends his beams and disperseth his influence to all, from the beginning of the world to the end of it. "We all receive of his fulness grace for grace;" as all the stars in heaven are said to light their candles at the sun's flame. For though his body be withdrawn from us, yet, by the lively and virtual contact of his Spirit, he is always kindling, cheering, quickening, warming, and enlivening hearts. Nay, this divine life, begun and kindled in any heart, wheresoever it be, is something of God in flesh, and, in a sober and qualified sense, Divinity incarnate; and all particular Christians, that are really possessed of it, so many mystical Christs.

And God forbid that God's own life and nature here in the world should be forlorn, forsaken, and abandoned of God himself. Certainly, wherever it is, though never

so little, like a sweet, young, tender babe, once born in any heart, when it crieth unto God the father of it, with pitiful and bemoaning looks imploring his compassion, it cannot choose but move his fatherly bowels, and make them yearn, and turn towards it, and, by strong sympathy, draw his compassionate arm to help and relieve it. Never was any tender infant so dear to those bowels that begat it, as an infant new-born Christ, formed in the heart of any true believer, to God the father of it. Shall the children of this world, the sons of darkness, be moved with such tender affection and compassion towards the fruit of their bodies, their own natural offspring? and shall God, who is the father of lights, the fountain of all goodness, be moved with no compassion towards his true spiritual offspring, and have no regard to those sweet babes of light, engendered by his own beams in men's hearts, that, in their lovely countenances, bear the resemblance of his own face, and call him their father? Shall he see them lie fainting, and gasping, and dying here in the world, for want of nothing to preserve and keep them, but an influence from him, who first gave them life and breath? No: hear the language of God's heart, hear the sounding of his bowels towards them: "Is it Ephraim, my dear son? is it that pleasant child? Since I spake of him, I do earnestly remember him; my bowels, my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." If those expressions of goodness and tender affection here, among the creatures, be but drops *of that full ocean* that is in God; how can we then *imagine that this* "Father of our spirits" should have so

little regard to his own dear offspring, I do not say our souls, but that which is the very life and soul of our souls, the life of God in us, (which is nothing else but God's own self communicated to us, his own Son born in our hearts,) as that he should suffer it to be cruelly murdered in its infancy by our sins, and, like young Hercules, in its very cradle to be strangled by those filthy vipers? that he should see him to be crucified by wicked lusts, nailed fast to the cross by invincible corruptions, pierced and gored on every side with the poisonous spears of the devil's temptations, and at last to give up the ghost; and yet his tender heart not at all relent, nor be all this while impassioned with so sad a spectacle? Surely we cannot think he hath such an adamantine breast, such a flinty nature as this is.

What, then, must we say, that though indeed he be willing, yet he is not able to rescue his crucified and tormented Son now bleeding upon the cross; to take him down from thence and save him? Then must sin be more powerful than God; that weak, crazy, and sickly thing, more strong than the Rock of Ages; and the devil, the prince of darkness, more mighty than the God of light. No, surely, there is a weakness and impotency in all evil, a masculine strength and vigour in all goodness; and therefore, doubtless, the highest good, the *πρῶτον ἀγαθόν*, as the philosophers call it, is the strongest thing in the world. *Nil potentius summo bono*. God's power displayed in the world is nothing but his goodness strongly reaching all things, from height to depth, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell; and irresistibly imparting itself to every thing, accord-

ing to those several degrees in which it is capable of it.

Have the friends of darkness, then, those poor forlorn spirits that are fettered and locked up in the chains of their own wickedness, any strength to withstand the force of infinite goodness, which is infinite power? or do they not rather sink in holes of darkness, and fly, like bats and owls, before the approaching beams of this Sun of Righteousness? Is God powerful to kill and to destroy, to damn and to torment? and is he not powerful to save? Nay, it is the sweetest flower in all the garland of his attributes, it is the richest diamond in his crown of glory, that he is "mighty to save;" and this is far more magnificent for him, than to be styled mighty to destroy. For that, except it be in the way of justice, speaks no power at all, but mere impotency: for the root of all power is goodness.

Or must we say, lastly, that God indeed is able to rescue us out of the power of sin and Satan, when we sigh and groan towards him; but yet, sometimes, to exercise his absolute authority, his uncontrollable dominion, he delights rather in plunging wretched souls down into infernal night and everlasting darkness? What shall we then make the God of the whole world? Nothing but a cruel and dreadful Erinnys, with curled fiery snakes about his head, and firebrands in his hands, thus governing the world? Surely this will make us either secretly to think that there is no God at all in the world, if he must needs be such; or else to wish heartily there were none. But, doubtless, God will at last confute all these our misapprehensions of him; be

will unmask our hypocritical pretences, and clearly cast the shame of all our sinful deficiencies upon ourselves, and vindicate his own glory from receiving the least stain or blemish by them. In the mean time, let us know that the Gospel now requireth far more of us than ever the Law did ; for it requireth a new creature, a divine nature, Christ formed in us : but yet, withal, it bestoweth a quickening Spirit, an enlivening power, to enable us to express that which is required of us. Whosoever, therefore, truly knows Christ, the same also keepeth Christ's commandments. But, "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

: I have now done with the first part of my discourse, concerning those observations which arise naturally from the words, and offer themselves to us. I shall, in the next place, proceed to make some general application of them altogether.

Now, therefore, I beseech you, let us consider whether or no we know Christ indeed : not by our acquaintance with systems and models of divinity ; not by our skill in books and papers ; but by our keeping of Christ's commandments. All the books and writings which we converse with, they can but represent spiritual objects to our understandings, which yet we can never see in their own true figure, colour, and proportion, until we have a divine light within, to irradiate and shine upon them. Though there be never such excellent truths concerning Christ and his Gospel set down in words and letters, yet they will be but unknown characters to us, until we have a living spirit within

us, that can decipher them ; until the same Spirit, by secret whispers in our hearts, do comment upon them, which did at first indite them. There be many that understand the Greek and Hebrew of the Scripture, the original languages in which the text was written, that never understood the language of the Spirit.

There is a *caro* and a *spiritus*, a flesh and a spirit, a body and a soul, in all the writings of the Scriptures. It is but the flesh and body of divine truths that is printed upon paper ; which many moths of books and libraries do only feed upon ; many walking skeletons of knowledge, that bury and entomb truths in the living sepulchres of their souls, do only converse with ; such as never did anything else but pick at the mere bark and rind of truths, and crack the shells of them. But there is a soul and spirit of divine truths that could never yet be congealed into ink, that could never be blotted upon paper ; which, by a secret traduction and conveyance, passeth from one soul into another, being able to dwell or lodge nowhere but in a spiritual being, in a living thing, because itself is nothing but life and spirit. Neither can it, where indeed it is, express itself sufficiently in words and sounds, but it will best declare and speak itself in actions ; as the old manner of writing among the Egyptians was, not by words, but things. The life of divine truths is better expressed in actions than in words, because actions are more living things than words : words are nothing but the dead resemblances and pictures of those truths which live and breathe in *actions* ; and “the kingdom of God (as the Apostle *eth*) consisteth not in word,” but in life and power.

Τὰ πρόβατα, οὐ χόρτον φέροντα τοῖς ποιμέσιν, ἐπιδεικνύει πόσον ἔφαγεν (saith the moral philosopher) ἀλλὰ τὴν νομὴν ἔσω πέψαντα ἔριον ἔξω φέρει καὶ γάλα : Sheep do not come and bring their fodder to their shepherd, and show him how much they eat ; but, inwardly concocting and digesting it, they make it appear by the fleece which they wear upon their backs, and by the milk which they give. And let not us Christians affect only to talk and dispute of Christ, and so measure our knowledge of him by our words ; but let us show ἀπὸ τῶν θεωρημάτων πεφθέντων τὰ ἔργα, our knowledge concocted into our lives and actions ; and then let us really manifest that we are Christ's sheep indeed, that we are his disciples, by that fleece of holiness which we wear, and by the fruits that we daily yield in our lives and conversations ; for “ herein (saith Christ) is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Let us not, I beseech you, judge of our knowing Christ by our own ungrounded persuasions that Christ from all eternity hath loved us, and given himself particularly for us, without the conformity of our lives to Christ's commandments, without the real partaking of the image of Christ in our hearts. The great mystery of the Gospel doth not lie only in Christ without us (though we must know also what he hath done for us) ; but the very pith and kernel of it consists in Christ inwardly formed in our hearts.

Nothing is truly ours but what lives in our spirits. Salvation itself cannot save us as long as it is only *without us* ; no more than health can cure us, and make

us sound, when it is not within us, but somewhere at a distance from us; no more than arts and sciences, whilst they lie only in books and papers without us, can make us learned. The Gospel, though it be a sovereign and medicinal thing itself, yet the mere knowing and believing of the history of it will do us no good; we can receive no virtue from it, till it be inwardly digested and concocted into our souls; till it be made ours, and become a living thing in our hearts. The Gospel, if it be only without us, cannot save us; no more than that physician's bill could cure the ignorant patient of his disease, who, when it was commended to him, took the paper only, and put it up in his pocket, but never drank the potion that was described in it.

All that Christ did for us in the flesh, when he was here upon earth; from his lying in a manger, when he was born in Bethlehem, to his bleeding upon the cross on Golgotha, it will not save us from our sins, unless Christ by his Spirit dwell in us. It will not avail us to believe that he was born of a virgin, unless the power of the Most High overshadow our hearts and beget him there likewise. It will not profit us to believe that he died upon the cross for us, unless we be baptized into his death by the mortification of all our lusts; unless the old man of sin be crucified in our hearts. Christ, indeed, hath made an expiation for our sins upon his cross, and the blood of Christ is the only sovereign balsam to free us from the guilt of them: but yet, besides the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon us, we must be made partakers also of his Spirit:

Christ came into the world, as well to redeem us from the power and bondage of our sins, as to free us from the guilt of them. "You know (saith St. John) that he was manifested to take away our sins: whosoever therefore abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him nor known him." Lo the end of Christ's coming into the world! Lo a design worthy of God manifested in the flesh!

Christ did not take all those pains to lay aside his robes of glory, and come down hither into the world, to enter into a virgin's womb, to be born in our human shape, and be laid a poor crying infant in a manger, and having no form or comeliness at all upon him, to take upon him the form of a servant, to undergo a reproachful and ignominious life, and at last to be abandoned to a shameful death, a death upon the cross;—I say he did not do all this merely to bring in a notion into the world, without producing any real and substantial effect at all; without the changing, mending, and reforming of the world; so that men should still be as wicked as they were before, and as much under the power of the prince of darkness, only they should not be thought so; they should still remain as full of all the filthy sores of sin and corruption as before, only they should be accounted whole. Shall God come down from heaven, and pitch a tabernacle amongst men? shall he undertake such a huge design, and make so great a noise of doing something, which, when it is all summed up, shall not at last amount to a reality? Surely Christ did not undergo all this to so little purpose; he would not take all this pains for us, that he

might be able at last to put into our hands nothing but a blank. He “was with child,” he “was in pain and travail;” and hath “he brought forth nothing but wind? hath he been delivered of the east wind?” Is that great design, that was so long carried in the womb of eternity, now proved abortive, or else nothing but a mere windy birth? No, surely: the end of the Gospel is life and perfection; it is a divine nature; it is a god-like frame and disposition of spirit; it is to make us partakers of the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, without which salvation itself were but a notion.

Christ came indeed into the world to make an expiation and atonement for our sins; but the end of this was, that we might eschew sin, that we might forsake all ungodliness and worldly lusts. The Gospel declares pardon of sin to those that are heavy laden with it and willing to be disburdened, to this end, that it might quicken and enliven us to new obedience. Whereas otherwise the guilt of sin might have detained us in horror and despair, and so have kept us still more strongly under the power of it, in sad and dismal apprehensions of God’s wrath provoked against us, and inevitably falling on us: but Christ hath now appeared like a day star, with most cheerful beams; nay, he is the Sun of Righteousness himself, which hath risen upon the world with his healing wings, with his exhilarating light, that he might chase away all those black despairing thoughts from us. But Christ did not rise that we should play, and sport, and wantonize with his light; but that we should do “the work of the day” in it;

that we should walk *εὐσχημόνως* (as the Apostle speaketh), not in our night-clothes of sinful deformity, but clad all over with the comely garments of light. The Gospel is not big with the child of a fancy, of a mere conceit of righteousness without us, hanging at distance over us, whilst our hearts within are nothing but cages of unclean birds, and like houses continually haunted with devils, nay, the very rendezvous of those fiends of darkness.

Holiness is the best thing that God himself can bestow upon us, either in this world, or the world to come. True evangelical holiness, that is, Christ formed in the hearts of believers, is the very cream and quintessence of the Gospel. And were our hearts sound within, were there not many thick and dark fumes, that did arise from thence, and cloud our understandings, we could not easily conceive the substance of heaven itself to be anything else but holiness, freed from those encumbrances, that did ever clog it and accloy it here: neither should we wish for any other heaven besides this. But many of us are like those children, whose stomachs are so vitiated by some disease that they think ashes, coal, mud wall, or any such trash, to be more pleasant than the most wholesome food: such sickly and distempered appetites have we about these spiritual things, that hanker after I know not what vain shows of happiness, whilst in the mean time we neglect that which is the only true food of our souls, that is able to nourish them up to everlasting life.

Grace is holiness militant, holiness encumbered with many enemies and difficulties, which it still fights

against, and manfully quits itself of; and glory is nothing else but holiness triumphant, holiness with a palm of victory in her hand, and a crown upon her head: *Deus ipse cum omni sua bonitate, quatenus extra me est, non facit me beatum, sed quatenus in me est:* God himself cannot make me happy, if he be only without me, and unless he give in a participation of himself, and his own likeness into my soul. Happiness is nothing but the releasing and unfettering of our souls from all these narrow, scant, and particular good things; and the espousing of them to the highest and most universal good, which is not this or that particular good, but goodness itself: and this is the same thing that we call holiness. Which because we ourselves are so little acquainted with (being for the most part ever courting a mere shadow of it), therefore we have such low, abject, and beggarly conceits thereof; whereas it is in itself the most noble, heroical, and generous thing in the world. For I mean by holiness nothing else but God stamped and printed upon the soul. And we may please ourselves with what conceits we will; but so long as we are void of this, we do but dream of heaven, and I know not what fond paradise; we do but blow up and down an airy bubble of our own fancies, which riseth out of the froth of our vain hearts; we do but court a painted heaven, and woo happiness in a picture, whilst in the mean time a true and real hell will suck in our souls into it, and soon make us sensible of a solid woe and substantial misery.

Divine wisdom hath so ordered the frame of the

whole universe, as that every thing should have a certain proper place, that should be a receptacle for it. Hell is the sink of all sin and wickedness. The strong magic of nature pulls and draws every thing continually to that place, which is suitable to it, and to which it doth belong ; so all these heavy bodies press downwards towards the centre of our earth, being drawn in by it : in like manner hell, wheresoever it is, will by strong sympathy pull in all sin, and magnetically draw it to itself ; as true holiness is always breathing upwards, and fluttering towards heaven, striving to embosom itself with God ; and it will at last undoubtedly be conjoined with him ; no dismal shades of darkness can possibly stop it in its course, or bear it back.

Ὡς αἰεὶ τὸ θεοῖον ἔχει δεξιὰ εἰς τὸ θεοῖον.

Nay, we do but deceive ourselves with names : hell is nothing but the orb of sin and wickedness, or else that hemisphere of darkness, in which all evil moves ; and heaven is the opposite hemisphere of light, or else, if you please, the bright orb of truth, holiness, and goodness : and we do actually in this life instate ourselves in the possession of one or other of them. Take sin and disobedience out of hell, and it will presently clear up into light, tranquillity, serenity, and shine out into a heaven. Every true saint carrieth his heaven about with him in his own heart ; and hell, that is without him, can have no power over him. He might safely wade through hell itself, and, like the three children, pass through the midst of that fiery furnace, and yet not at all be scorched with the flames of it : he might walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, and yet fear no evil.

Sin is the only thing in the world that is contrary to God. God is light, and that is darkness; God is beauty, and that is ugliness and deformity. All sin is direct rebellion against God; and with what notions soever we may sugar it and sweeten it, yet God can never smile upon it, he will never make a truce with it. God declares open war against sin, and bids defiance to it; for it is a professed enemy to God's own life and being. God, which is infinite goodness, cannot but hate sin, which is purely evil. And though sin be in itself but a poor, impotent, and crazy thing, nothing but straitness, poverty, and nonenity, so that of itself it is the most wretched and miserable thing in the world, and needeth no further punishment besides itself; yet divine vengeance beats it off still further and further from God, and, wheresoever it is, will be sure to scourge it and lash it continually. God and sin can never agree together.

That I may therefore come yet nearer to ourselves: This is the message that I have now to declare unto you, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." Christ and the Gospel are light, and there is no darkness at all in them: if you say that you know Christ and his Gospel, and yet keep not Christ's commandments, but dearly hug your private darling corruptions, you are liars, and the truth is not in you; you have no acquaintance with the God of light, nor the Gospel of

light. If any of you say that you know Christ, and have an interest in him, and yet (as I fear too many do) still nourish ambition, pride, vain-glory within your breasts; harbour malice, revengefulness, and cruel hatred to your neighbours in your hearts; eagerly scramble after this worldly pelf, and make the strength of your parts and endeavours serve that blind Mammon, the god of this world; if you wallow and tumble in the filthy puddle of fleshly pleasures, or if you aim only at yourselves in your lives, and make yourself the compass by which you sail, and the star by which you steer your course, looking at nothing higher or more noble than yourselves; deceive not yourselves, you have neither seen Christ, nor known him: you are deeply incorporated (if I may so speak) with the spirit of this world, and have no true sympathy with God and Christ, no fellowship at all with them.

And, I beseech you, let us consider; be there not many of us that pretend much to Christ, that are plainly in our lives as proud, ambitious, vain-glorious as any others? Be there not many of us that are as much under the power of unruly passions, as cruel, revengeful, malicious, censorious, as others? that have our minds as deeply engaged in the world, and as much envassalled to riches, gain, profit, those great admired deities of the sons of men, and their souls as much overwhelmed and sunk with the cares of this life? Do not many of us as much give ourselves to the pleasures of the flesh, and though not without regrets of conscience, yet ever now and then secretly soak ourselves in them? Be there not many of us that have as

deep a share likewise in injustice and oppression, in vexing the fatherless and the widows? I wish it may not prove some of our cases at that last day, to use such pleas as these unto Christ in our behalf: "Lord, I have prophesied in thy name; I have preached many a zealous sermon for thee; I have kept many a long fast; I have been very active for thy cause in church, in state; nay, I never made any question but that my name was written in thy book of life:" when yet, alas, we shall receive no other return from Christ but this: "I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." I am sure there be too many of us that have long pretended to Christ, which make little or no progress in true Christianity, that is, holiness of life; that ever hang hovering in a twilight of grace, and never seriously put ourselves forward into clear daylight, but esteem that glimmering *crepusculum* which we are in, and like that faint twilight better than broad open day: whereas, "the path of the just (as the Wise Man speaks) is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." I am sure there be many of us that are perpetual dwarfs in our spiritual stature, like those silly women (that St. Paul speaks of) laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts, that are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;" that are not now one jot taller in Christianity than we were many years ago, but have still as sickly, crazy, and unsound a temper of soul as we had long before.

Indeed, we seem to do something; we are always moving and lifting at the stone of corruption, that lies

upon our hearts, but yet we never stir it notwithstanding, or, at least, never roll it off from us. We are sometimes a little troubled with the guilt of our sins, and then we think we must thrust our lusts out of our hearts ; but, afterwards, we sprinkle ourselves over with I know not what holy water, and so are contented to let them still abide quietly within us. We do every day truly confess the same sins, and pray against them ; and yet still commit them as much as ever, and lie as deeply under the power of them. We have the same water to pump out in every prayer, and still we let the same leak in again upon us. We make a great deal of noise, and raise a great deal of dust with our feet ; but we do not move from off the ground on which we stood, we do not go forward at all : or if we do sometimes make a little progress, we quickly lose again the ground which we had gained ; like those upper planets in the heaven, which (as the astronomers tell us) sometimes move forwards, sometimes quite backwards, and sometimes perfectly stand still ; have their stations and retrogradations, as well as their direct motions. As if religion were nothing else but a dancing up and down upon the same piece of ground, and making several motions and friskings on it ; and not a sober journeying and travelling onwards toward some certain place. We do and undo ; we do *Penelopes telam texere* ; we weave sometimes a web of holiness, but then we let our lusts come, and undo and unravel all again. Like Sisyphus in the fable, we roll up a mighty stone, with much ado, sweating, and tugging, up the hill ; and then we let it go, and tumble down again unto the bottom ; and

this is our constant work. Like those Danaides, which the poets speak of, we are always filling water into a sieve, by our prayers, duties, and performances, which still runs out as fast as we pour it in.

What is it that thus cheats us and gulls us of our religion? that makes us thus constantly to tread the same ring and circle of duties, where we make no progress at all forwards, and the further we go, are still never the nearer to our journey's end? What is it that thus starves our religion, and makes it look like those kine in Pharaoh's dream, ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, that it hath no colour in its face, no blood in its veins, no life nor heat at all in its members? What is it that doth thus bedwarf us in our Christianity? What low, sordid, and unworthy principles do we act by, that thus hinder our growth, and make us stand at a stay, and keep us always at the very porch and entrance where we first began? Is it a sleepy, sluggish conceit, that it is enough for us if we be but once in a state of grace, if we have but once stepped over the threshold, we need not take so great pains to travel any further? or is it another damping, choking, stifling opinion, that Christ hath done all for us already without us, and nothing need more to be done within us? no matter how wicked we be in ourselves, for we have holiness without us; no matter how sickly and diseased our souls be within, for they have health without them. Why may we not as well be satisfied and contented to have *happiness* without us too, to all eternity, and so *ourselves* for ever continue miserable? "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness in

righteous, even as He is righteous: but he that committeth sin is of the devil." I shall therefore exhort you in the wholesome words of St. Peter: "Give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity: for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Apostle still goes on, and I cannot leave him yet: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was once purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Let us not only talk and dispute of Christ, but let us indeed put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Having those great and precious promises, which he hath given us, let us strive to be made partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust; and, being begotten again to a lively hope of enjoying Christ hereafter, let us purify ourselves, as he is pure.

Let us really declare that we know Christ, that we are his disciples, by our keeping of his commandments; and, amongst the rest, that commandment especially, which our Saviour Christ himself commendeth to his disciples in a peculiar manner: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you:" and again, "These things I command you, *that you love one another.*" Let us "follow

peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God." Let us "put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave us: and above all these things let us put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Let us "in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the devil, that are taken captive by him at his will." "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and whosoever loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

O divine love! the sweet harmony of souls! the music of angels! the joy of God's own heart! the very darling of his bosom! the source of true happiness! the pure quintessence of heaven! that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together! that which melts men's hearts into one another! See how St. Paul describes it, and it cannot choose but enamour your affections towards it: "Love envieth not, it is not puffed up, it doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." I may add, in a word, it is the best-natured thing, the best complexioned thing in the world. Let us express this sweet harmonious affection in these jarring times; that so, if it *be possible*, we may tune the world into better music.

Especially in matters of religion, let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the Gospel of peace, the dove-like Gospel, with a dove-like spirit. This was the way by which the Gospel at first was propagated in the world: Christ did not cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench; and yet he brought "forth judgment unto victory." He whispered the Gospel to us from mount Sion, in a still voice; and yet the sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the earth. The Gospel at first came down upon the world gently and softly, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; and yet it quickly soaked quite through it: and, doubtless, this is still the most effectual way to promote it further. Sweetness and ingenuity will more command men's minds than passion, sourness, and severity; as the soft pillow sooner breaks the flint, than the hardest marble. Let us ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ, follow truth in love — and of the two, indeed, be contented rather to miss of the conveying of a speculative truth, than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are two the most powerful things in the world; and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth and the silken cords of love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence, whether they will or no.

Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and his Gospel, which is nothing else but our

own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love: It never calls for fire from heaven to consume those that differ a little from us in their apprehensions. It is like that kind of lightning (which the philosophers speak of) that melts the sword within, but singeth not the scabbard: it strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body. True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification, and not to destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt; it only warmeth, quickeneth, and enliveneth us: but if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh, and kindle our corrupt nature, and set the house of our body on fire, it is no longer zeal, it is no heavenly fire, it is a most destructive and devouring thing. True zeal is an *ignis lambens*, a soft and gentle flame, that will not scorch one's hand; it is no predatory or voracious thing: but carnal and fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True zeal is like the vital heat in us, that we live upon, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome; but though it gently feed upon the radical oil within us, that sweet balsam of our natural moisture, yet it lives lovingly with it, and maintains that by which it is fed: but that other furious and distempered zeal is nothing else but a fever in the soul. To conclude: we may learn what kind of *zeal it is* that we should make use of in promoting the *Gospel*, by an emblem of God's own, given us in the

Scripture, those fiery tongues, that, upon the day of Pentecost, sat upon the Apostles, which sure were harmless flames, for we cannot read that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe a hair of their heads.

I will therefore shut up this with that of the Apostle; "Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Let this soft and silken knot of love tie our hearts together; though our heads and apprehensions cannot meet, as indeed they never will, but always stand at some distance off from one another. Our zeal, if it be heavenly, if it be true vestal fire kindled from above, will not delight to tarry here below, burning up straw and stubble and such combustible things, and sending up nothing but gross and earthy fumes to heaven; but it will rise up, and return back pure as it came down, and will be ever striving to carry up men's hearts to God along with it; it will be only occupied about the promoting of those things which are unquestionably good; and when it moves in the irascible way, it will quarrel with nothing but sin. Here let our zeal busy and exercise itself, every one of us beginning first at our own hearts. Let us be more zealous than ever we have yet been in fighting against our lusts, in pulling down those strong holds of sin and Satan in our hearts. Here let us exercise all our courage and resolution, our manhood and magnanimity.

Let us trust in the almighty arm of our God, and doubt not but he will as well deliver us from the power of *sin in our hearts*, as preserve us from the wrath to

come. Let us go out against these uncircumcised Philistines, I mean our lusts, not with shield or spear, not in any confidence of our own strength, but in the name of the Lord of hosts; and we shall prevail, we shall overcome our lusts: "for greater is he that is in us, than he that is in them." "The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; he shall thrust out these enemies from before us; and he shall say, Destroy them." We shall enter the true Canaan, the good land of promise, "that floweth with milk and honey," the land of truth and holiness. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand. Let your loins be girt about with truth, have on the breast-plate of righteousness, and let your feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all take the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." And lastly, be sure of this, that ye "be strong only in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

There be some that dishearten us in this spiritual warfare, and would make us let our weapons fall out of our hands, by working in us a despair of victory. There be some evil spies, that weaken the hands and hearts of the children of Israel, and bring an ill report upon that land that we are to conquer, telling of nothing but strange giants, the sons of Anak, there, that we shall never be able to overcome. "The Amalekites (say they) dwell in the south, the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites in the mountains, and the Canaan-

ites by the sea-coast ;” huge armies of tall invincible lusts : “ we shall never be able to go against this people ;” we shall never be able to prevail against our corruptions. Hearken not unto them, I beseech you ; but hear what Caleb and Joshua say : “ Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are able to overcome them ;” not by our own strength, but by the power of the Lord of hosts. There are, indeed, sons of Anak there, there are mighty giant-like lusts, that we are to grapple with ; nay, there are principalities and powers too, that we are to oppose : but the great Michael, the captain of the Lord’s host, is with us ; he commands in chief for us, and we need not be dismayed. “ Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth before thee as a consuming fire ; he shall destroy these enemies, and bring them down before thy face.” If thou wilt be faithful to him, and put thy trust in him, as the fire consumeth the stubble, and as the flame burneth up the chaff, so will he destroy thy lusts in thee : their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust.

But let us take heed, that we be not discouraged, and before we begin to fight, despair of victory : but to believe and hope well in the power of our God and his strength, will be half a conquest. Let us not think holiness in the hearts of men here in the world is a forlorn, forsaken, and outcast thing from God, that he hath no regard of. Holiness, wherever it is, though never so small, if it be but hearty and sincere, it can no more be cut off and discontinued from God, than a sun-beam here upon earth can be broken off from its inter-

course with the sun, and be left alone amidst the mire and dirt of this world. The sun may as well discard its own rays, and banish them from itself into some region of darkness far remote from it, where they shall have no dependence at all upon it, as God can forsake and abandon holiness in the world, and leave it a poor orphan thing that shall have no influence at all from him to preserve and keep it. Holiness is something of God, wherever it is; it is an efflux from him, that always hangs upon him, and lives in him: as the sunbeams, although they gild this lower world and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun, from whence they flow. God cannot draw a curtain betwixt himself and holiness, which is nothing but the splendour and shining of himself; he cannot hide his face from it, he cannot desert it in the world. He that is once born of God shall overcome the world, and the prince of this world too, by the power of God in him. Holiness is no solitary neglected thing; it hath stronger confederacies, greater alliances, than sin and wickedness. It is in league with God and the universe; the whole creation smiles upon it: there is something of God in it, and therefore it must needs be a victorious and triumphant thing.

Wickedness is a weak, cowardly, and guilty thing, a fearful and trembling shadow. It is the child of ignorance and darkness; it is afraid of light, and cannot possibly withstand the power of it, nor endure the sight of its glittering armour. It is allied to none but *wretched, forlorn, and apostate spirits*, that do what

they can to support their own weak and tottering kingdom of darkness, but are only strong in weakness and impotency. The whole polity and commonwealth of devils is not so powerful as one child of light, one bal in Christ; they are not able to quench the least smoking flax, to extinguish one spark of grace. Darkness is not able to make resistance against light, but ever, as it comes, flies before it. But if wickedness invite the society of devils to it (as we learn by the sad experience of these present times, in many examples of those that were possessed with malice, revengefulness, and lust, so that those cursed fiends do most readily apply themselves to it, and offer their service to feed it and encourage it, because it is their own life and nature, their own kingdom of darkness, which they strive to enlarge and to spread the dominions of; shall we then think that holiness, which is so nearly allied unto God, has no good genius at all in the world to attend upon it, to help it, and encourage it? Shall not the kingdom of light be as true to its own interest, and as vigilant in the enlarging of itself, as the kingdom of darkness? Holiness is never alone in the world, but God is always with it, and his loving Spirit doth ever associate and join itself to it. He that sent it into the world is with it; as Christ speaketh of himself, "The Father hath not left me alone, because I do always those things that please him." Holiness is the life of God, which he cannot but feed and maintain wheresoever it is: and as devils are always active to encourage evil, so we can imagine but that the heavenly host of blessed angels above are busily employed in the promoting of

which they love best, that which is dearest to God, whom they serve, the life and nature of God. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner; heaven takes notice of it; there is a choir of angels that sweetly sings the epithalamium of a soul divorced from sin and Satan, and espoused unto Christ. What, therefore, the Wise Man speaks concerning wisdom, I shall apply to holiness: "Take fast hold of holiness, let her not go, keep her, for she is thy life: keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and of death too. Let nothing be esteemed of greater consequence and concernment to thee than what thou doest and actest, how thou livest. Nothing without us can make us either happy or miserable; nothing can either defile us or hurt us, but what goeth out from us, what springeth and bubbleth up out of our own hearts. We have dreadful apprehensions of the flames of hell without us; we tremble, and are afraid, when we hear of fire and brimstone; whilst in the mean time we securely nourish within our own hearts a true and living hell—

" ————— et cæco carpimur igni: "

The dark fire of our lusts consumeth our bowels within, and miserably scorseth our souls, and we are not troubled at it. We do not perceive how hell steals upon us whilst we live here. And as for heaven, we only gaze abroad, expecting that it should come in to us from without, but never look for the beginnings of it to arise within, in our own hearts.

But lest there should yet haply remain any prejudice against that which I have all this while heartily com-

mended to you, true holiness, and the keeping of Christ's commandments, as if it were a legal and servile thing, that would subject us to a state of bondage, I must here needs add a word or two, either for the prevention or removal of it. I do not therefore mean by holiness, the mere performance of outward duties of religion, coldly acted over as a task; not our habitual prayings, hearings, fastings, multiplied one upon another (though these be all good, as subservient to a higher end); but I mean an inward soul and principle of divine life, that spiriteth all these, that enliveneth and quickeneth the dead carcass of all our outward performances whatsoever. I do not here urge the "dead law of outward works," which, indeed, if it be alone, subjects us to a "state of bondage;" but the inward law of the Gospel, the "law of the Spirit of life," than which nothing can be more free and ingenuous; for it doth not act us by principles without us, but is an inward self-moving principle living in our hearts.

The first, though it work us into some outward conformity to God's commandments, and so hath a good effect upon the world; yet we are all this while but like dead instruments of music, that sound sweetly and harmoniously when they are only struck and played upon from without by the musician's hand, who hath the theory and law of music living within himself.

But the second, the living law of the Gospel, the "law of the Spirit of life" within us, is as if the soul of music should incorporate itself with the instrument, and live in the strings, and make them of their own

accord, without any touch or impulse from without, dance up and down, and warble out their harmonies.

They that are acted only by an outward law are but like *neurospasts*, or those little puppets that skip nimbly up and down, and seem to be full of quick and sprightly motion; whereas they are all the while moved artificially by certain wires and strings from without, and not by any principle of motion from themselves within: or else like clocks and watches, that go pretty regularly for a while, but are moved by weights and plummetts, or some other artificial springs, that must be ever now and then wound up, or else they cease.

But they that are acted by the new law of the Gospel, by the "law of the Spirit," they have an inward principle of life in them, that from the centre of itself puts forth itself freely and constantly into all obedience to the will of Christ. This new law of the Gospel is a kind of musical soul, informing the dead organ of our hearts, that makes them of their own accord delight to act harmoniously according to the rule of God's word.

The law that I speak of is a law of love, which is the most powerful law in the world; and yet it freeth us in a manner from all law without us, because it maketh us become a law unto ourselves. The more it prevaieth in us, the more it eateth up and devoureth all other laws without us; just as Aaron's living rod did swallow up those rods of the magicians, that were made only to counterfeit a little life.

"Quis legem det amantibus?
Major lex amor est sibi."

Love is at once a freedom from all law, a state of purest liberty, and yet a law too of the most constraining and indispensable necessity.

The worst law in the world is the "law of sin, which is in our members;" which keeps us in a condition of most absolute slavery, when we are wholly under the tyrannical commands of our lusts: this is a cruel Pharaoh indeed, that sets his hard task-masters over us, and maketh us wretchedly drudge in mire and clay.

The law of the letter without us sets us in a condition of little more liberty, by restraining us from many outward acts of sin; but yet it doth not disenthral us from the power of sin in our hearts.

But the "law of the Spirit of life," the Gospel law of love, it puts us into a condition of most pure and perfect liberty; and whosoever really entertains this law, he hath "thrust out Hagar" quite, he hath "cast out the bond-woman and her children;" from henceforth Sarah, the free-woman, shall live for ever with him, and she shall be to him a mother of many children; her seed shall be "as the sand of the sea-shore for number," and "as the stars of heaven." Here is evangelical liberty, here is gospel freedom, when "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death;" when we have a liberty from sin, and not a liberty to sin: for our dear Lord and Master hath told us, that "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of it."

He that lies under the power and vassalage of his base lusts, and yet talks of gospel freedom, he is but like a poor *condemned* prisoner, that in his sleep dreams

of being set at liberty, and of walking up and down wheresoever he pleaseth, whilst his legs are all the while locked fast in fetters and irons. To please ourselves with a notion of gospel liberty, whilst we have not a gospel principle of holiness within us, to free us from the power of sin, is nothing else but to gild over our bonds and fetters, and to fancy ourselves to be in a golden cage. There is a straitness, slavery, and narrowness in sin: sin crowds and crumples up our souls, which, if they were freely spread abroad, would be as wide and as large as the whole universe.

No man is truly free but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God's own will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else. Such an one doth not fondly hug this and that particular created good thing, and envassal himself unto it; but he loveth every thing that is lovely, beginning at God, and descending down to all his creatures, according to the several degrees of perfection in them. He enjoys a boundless liberty, and a boundless sweetness, according to his boundless love. He enclaspeth the whole world within his outstretched arms; his soul is as wide as the whole universe, as big as "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Whosoever is once acquainted with this disposition of spirit, he never desires any thing else; he loves the life of God in himself dearer than his own life. To conclude this, therefore; if we love Christ, and keep his commandments, his commandments will not be grievous to us; his yoke will be easy, and his burden light: it *will not put us into a state of bondage, but of perfect liberty.* For it is most true of evangelical obedience,

DR. CUDWORTH.] CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS

what the Wise Man speaketh of wisdom, "he ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are p is a tree of life to those that lay hold upon happy are all they that retain her."

I will now shut up all with one or two cons to persuade you further to the keeping of Ch mandments.

First, from the desire which we all have ledge. If we would indeed know divine t only way to come to this is by keeping of Ch mandments. The grossness of our appreh spiritual things, and our many mistakes tha about them, proceed from nothing but those foggy steams which rise up from our foul becloud our understandings. If we did b comply with Christ's commandments, and hearts from all gross and sensual affections, not then look about for truth wholly withou and enslave ourselves to the dictates of th teacher, and hang upon the lips of men; but find the great eternal God inwardly teaching and continually instructing us more and n mysteries of his will; and "out of our be flow rivers of living waters." Nothing puts hindrance to the passage of truth in the wo carnality of our hearts, the corruption of ou

It is not wrangling disputes, and syllogis ings, that are the mighty pillars that unde in the world: if we would but underset holiness of our hearts and lives, it shoul Truth is a prevailing and conquering thi

quickly overcome the world, did not the earthiness of our dispositions and the darkness of our false hearts hinder it. Our Saviour Christ bids the blind man wash off the clay that was upon his eyes in the pool of Siloam, and then he should see clearly; intimating this to us, that it is the earthiness of men's affections that darkens the eye of their understandings in spiritual things. Truth is always ready and near at hand, if our eyes were not closed up with mud, that we could but open them to look upon it. Truth always waits upon our souls, and offers itself freely to us, as the sun offers its beams to every eye that will but open and let them shine in upon it. If we could but purge our hearts from that filth and defilement which hangeth about them, there would be no doubt at all of truth's prevailing in the world. For truth is great, and stronger than all things: all the earth calleth upon truth, and the heaven blesseth it; all works shake and tremble at it. The truth endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. She is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth.

Secondly: If we desire a true reformation, as some would be thought to do; let us begin here, in reforming our hearts and lives, in keeping Christ's commandments. All outward forms and models of reformation, though they be never so good in their kind, yet they are of little worth to us without this inward reformation of the heart. Tin, or lead, or any other baser metal, if it *be cast into* never so good a mould, and made up into *never so elegant a figure*, yet it is but tin or lead still;

id not the earliness of our false bids the blind eyes in the pool of S; intimating this s affections that are in spiritual ar at hand, if our that we could be always waits upon us, as the sun offers but open and let I but purge our which hangeth at all of truth's great, and stronger h upon truth. and take and tremble ys strong; it liveth the strength, king Blessed be the God

e reformation, as begin here, in reform Christ's commandments of reformation, that kind, yet they are nward reformation, rather baser metal would, and made up but tin or lead

it is the same metal that it was before. If adulterous silver, that hath much alloy or dross in it, have never so current a stamp put upon it, yet it will not pass notwithstanding, when the touchstone trieth it. We must be reformed within, with a spirit of fire, and a spirit of burning, to purge us from the dross and corruption of our hearts, and refine us as gold and silver; and then we shall be reformed truly, and not before. When this once comes to pass, then shall Christ be upon his throne indeed; then "the glory of the Lord shall overflow the land;" then we shall be a people acceptable unto him, and as Mount Sion, which is dearly loved.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

[BISHOP BEVERIDGE.]

MATT. xxii. 37.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and
with all thy mind.*

LET me now bespeak your affection for the Lord your God; not the love you have for other things, but a love above all things: gather up your scattered affections from all things here below, and fix them upon him that made them. Put him not off any longer with overpowered passions, but love him most whom be sure you can never love too much: no, never fear excess in your love to God, which is capable of no other extreme but only of defect. In other things mediocrity is a virtue, but here it is a vice: for we must love him exceedingly, or we cannot love him truly; so that the only measure of our loving him is to love him without measure: and therefore, he that thinks he loves God enough, doth not love him at all. In creature-comforts *our affections* may grow excessive, and our love *exorbitant*; but the transcendent perfections that reside in *God*, render him so incapable of being loved too much,

but the Wise Man speaketh of wisdom, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: she is a tree of life to those that lay hold upon her, and happy are all they that retain her."

I will now shut up all with one or two considerations, to persuade you further to the keeping of Christ's commandments.

First, from the desire which we all have of knowledge. If we would indeed know divine truths, the only way to come to this is by keeping of Christ's commandments. The grossness of our apprehensions in spiritual things, and our many mistakes that we make about them, proceed from nothing but those foul and foggy steams which rise up from our foul hearts, and cloud our understandings. If we did not heartily comply with Christ's commandments, and purge our hearts from all gross and sensual affections, we should not then look about for truth wholly without success, and enslave ourselves to the dictates of this and that teacher, and hang upon the lips of men; but we should find the great eternal God inwardly teaching our souls, and continually instructing us more and more in the mysteries of his will; and "out of our bellies should flow rivers of living waters." Nothing puts a stop and barrier to the passage of truth in the world, but the corruption of our lives. It is not want of talents, and syllogistical reasoning, that impedes the progress of truth in the world: but it is that we direct it with the light of our passions, which should never fail. If we were all pure, we should see the light, and would

of being set at liberty, and of walking up and down wheresoever he pleaseth, whilst his legs are all the while locked fast in fetters and irons. To please ourselves with a notion of gospel liberty, whilst we have not a gospel principle of holiness within us, to free us from the power of sin, is nothing else but to gild over our bonds and fetters, and to fancy ourselves to be in a golden cage. There is a straitness, slavery, and narrowness in sin: sin crowds and crumples up our souls, which, if they were freely spread abroad, would be as wide and as large as the whole universe.

No man is truly free but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God's own will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else. Such an one doth not fondly hug this and that particular created good thing, and envassal himself unto it; but he loveth every thing that is lovely, beginning at God, and descending down to all his creatures, according to the several degrees of perfection in them. He enjoys a boundless liberty, and a boundless sweetness, according to his boundless love. He enclaspeth the whole world within his outstretched arms; his soul is as wide as the whole universe, as big as "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Whosoever is once acquainted with this disposition of spirit, he never desires any thing else; he loves the life of God in himself dearer than his own life. To conclude this, therefore; if we love Christ, and keep his commandments, his commandments will not be grievous to us; his yoke will be easy, and his burden light: it *will not* put us into a state of bondage, but of perfect *liberty*. For it is most true of evangelical obedience,

what the Wise Man speaketh of wisdom, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: she is a tree of life to those that lay hold upon her, and happy are all they that retain her."

I will now shut up all with one or two considerations, to persuade you further to the keeping of Christ's commandments.

First, from the desire which we all have of knowledge. If we would indeed know divine truths, the only way to come to this is by keeping of Christ's commandments. The grossness of our apprehensions in spiritual things, and our many mistakes that we have about them, proceed from nothing but those dull and foggy steams which rise up from our foul hearts, and becloud our understandings. If we did but heartily comply with Christ's commandments, and purge our hearts from all gross and sensual affections, we should not then look about for truth wholly without ourselves, and enslave ourselves to the dictates of this and that teacher, and hang upon the lips of men; but we should find the great eternal God inwardly teaching our souls, and continually instructing us more and more in the mysteries of his will; and "out of our bellies should flow rivers of living waters." Nothing puts a stop and hindrance to the passage of truth in the world, but the carnality of our hearts, the corruption of our lives.

It is not wrangling disputes, and syllogistical reasonings, that are the mighty pillars that underprop truth in the world: if we would but underset it with the holiness of our hearts and lives, it should never fail. Truth is a prevailing and conquering thing, and would

quickly overcome the world, did not the earthiness of our dispositions and the darkness of our false hearts hinder it. Our Saviour Christ bids the blind man wash off the clay that was upon his eyes in the pool of Siloam, and then he should see clearly; intimating this to us, that it is the earthiness of men's affections that darkens the eye of their understandings in spiritual things. Truth is always ready and near at hand, if our eyes were not closed up with mud, that we could but open them to look upon it. Truth always waits upon our souls, and offers itself freely to us, as the sun offers its beams to every eye that will but open and let them shine in upon it. If we could but purge our hearts from that filth and defilement which hangeth about them, there would be no doubt at all of truth's prevailing in the world. For truth is great, and stronger than all things: all the earth calleth upon truth, and the heaven blesseth it; all works shake and tremble at it. The truth endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. She is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth.

Secondly: If we desire a true reformation, as some would be thought to do; let us begin here, in reforming our hearts and lives, in keeping Christ's commandments. All outward forms and models of reformation, though they be never so good in their kind, yet they are of little worth to us without this inward reformation of the heart. Tin, or lead, or any other baser metal, if it be cast into never so good a mould, and made up into never so elegant a figure, yet it is but tin or lead still;

it is the same metal that it was before. If adulterate silver, that hath much alloy or dross in it, have never so current a stamp put upon it, yet it will not pass, notwithstanding, when the touchstone trieth it. We must be reformed within, with a spirit of fire, and a spirit of burning, to purge us from the dross and corruption of our hearts, and refine us as gold and silver; and then we shall be reformed truly, and not before. When this once comes to pass, then shall Christ be set upon his throne indeed; then "the glory of the Lord shall overflow the land;" then we shall be a people acceptable unto him, and as Mount Sion, which he dearly loved,

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

[BISHOP BEVERIDGE.]

MATT. xxii. 37.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and
with all thy mind.*

LET me now bespeak your affection for the Lord your God; not the love you have for other things, but a love above all things: gather up your scattered affections from all things here below, and fix them upon him that made them. Put him not off any longer with overpowered passions, but love him most whom be sure you can never love too much: no, never fear excess in your love to God, which is capable of no other extreme but only of defect. In other things mediocrity is a virtue, but here it is a vice: for we must love him exceedingly, or we cannot love him truly; so that the only measure of our loving him is to love him without measure: and therefore, he that thinks he loves God enough, doth not love him at all. In creature-comforts our affections may grow excessive, and our love exorbitant; but the transcendent perfections that reside in God, render him so incapable of being loved too much,

that the highest passions that we can raise up to him are still infinitely below what he deserves from us. No, take it for a certain truth, you can never love the world too little, nor God too much. Our love to other things is like other rivers, the best when it keeps within its bounds; but our love to God is like the river Nilus in Egypt, most welcome when it overflows. Bridle, therefore, your passions to the creatures, but let them run loose to their Creator. Never fear loving him too much, seeing the highest of your passions is no more than finite, whereas the lowest of his perfections is no less than infinite. You can never love God more than you ought; and therefore love him as much as you can.

Where, when I say you must always love him, I do not mean as if you should have some love for him as well as for other things, but that you should have more love for him than all things; for that is not accounted as love to God which is either surpassed or equalled with our love to the creatures: and therefore, whensoever you hear me mention loving of God, you must still apprehend me speaking of such a love to him as exceeds and outstrips our love to all things besides; for we love God no more than we love him more than all things else. He that loves God no more than other things, loves the other things more than God; for he hath no love for God at all, because he doth not love him above all. For, I say again, we have no more love for him than we have more love for him than other things. So long as our love is matched or over-topped with our love to other things, we may love the other things, but we do not love

God ; but the least degree of our love to God more than to all things else, makes it to be true and acceptable love to him. Some may love God many degrees beyond all things else, others few ; and so one man may have more love to God than another ; but he that loveth him never a degree beyond all things else, he hath no love for him at all. And therefore I say again, when you hear me advising you to love God, I would have you all along remember, I mean only such a love to him as surmounts and exceeds your affections to all things in the world besides. This is the love that God requires of us, and this is the love that we owe to God. This, therefore, is the love that I counsel you all, as you will answer it at the dreadful day of judgment, to fix upon the great God. It is too, too long already that you have loved other things more than God ; now, for shame, begin to love God more than all other things.

Oh, therefore, that I knew what words to take unto myself, that whilst I am speaking, this sacred fire may kindle in all your souls, that you may no longer commit sacrilege, in robbing God of that which he hath commanded you to appropriate to himself. I know your affections are so glued to the world, that it is not in the power of man to rend them thence, much less is it within the reach of human strength to raise them up from earth to heaven, and from sin to God. But I know also it is by such counsels, commands, and exhortations to you, that God is pleased to work this and all other graces in you. It is by his ministers that he *useth* to strike this sacred fire out of our flinty hearts. To raise up, therefore, your affections to the most high God, give me leave to present some motives to you ; and

the Lord of his infinite mercy be pleased to work them upon you, that whilst you hear the voice of your fellow-creature sounding in your ears, you may feel the power of your great Creator reaching to your hearts, wrenching your affections from all things here below, and mounting them up unto himself above.

Well, then, what motives shall I use to prevail upon you? Verily, my brethren, whilst I consider what considerations to lay before you, to blow up your affections unto God, there are so many crowd themselves into my busy thoughts, to be presented unto yours, that I scarce know where to begin; and when I have begun, I fear I shall scarce know where to end. I cannot look upon you, as being in this place, but I must tell you, you are bound to love the great God for it; for had not he loved you, you would not have been in God's house, but the devil's dungeon, at this very moment; and certainly his love to you may well deserve your love to him. Nay, I cannot send mine eye any way, but it still brings me in new motives to love God. If I look above me, there are the heavens that he hath made for our future happiness; if beneath me, there is the earth that he hath made for our present abode; if about me, there are the creatures he hath made for our use and comfort, all calling upon us to love that God that made them. Nay, verily, my very calling upon you to love God is a mercy for which you are bound to love him; and the more I call upon you to love him the more are you bound to love him for my calling upon you. Nay, to speak plainly, if there be ever a soul *in the congregation* that loves God, let me tell

thee thou art bound to love him more for thy loving him at all; so that not only his love to thee, but thy love to him should stir up in thee still greater affections for him; for assure thyself thou art infinitely engaged to him for thy loving of him, as well as for his loving of thee; for had not he first loved thee, thou couldst never have loved him.

Thus, I say, I can fix mine eyes upon nothing, but it supplies me with fresh motives to love God. But for my more orderly presenting them unto your thoughts, I shall digest them all into two heads, endeavouring to raise up your affections unto God from the consideration.

1. Of the properties of that love we ought to have for God.

2dly. Of the perfections of that God we ought to love.

1. From the properties of the love we owe to God. And, certainly, did we but know what it was to love God experimentally, as well as notionally, we should find there is greater happiness to be enjoyed in the performance of this one duty, than in all the enjoyments that this world can afford us. Give me leave to show you some of the rare properties of this divine love.

1. "It is the first and the great commandment." Matt. xxii. 38.

1. It is the first commandment.

First, in order, for this is the first of all the ten commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Exod. xx. 3. Which is as much as if he should have said, "Thou shalt love nothing as God before me,

worship nothing as God before me, serve nothing as God before me; nay, thou shalt not so much as have any other gods before me." Whereas it is plain that he that loves any thing more than God, or doth not love God more than all things, he hath and loveth other gods before Jehovah. For whatsoever a man loves and prefers before other things, that is his God. Thus, a voluptuous person is said "to make his belly his God" (Phil. iii. 19.), because he minds his belly before all things else, And therefore is covetousness called "idolatry" (Coloss. iii. 5.), because the covetous man minds and loves his riches more than all things else. And the reason is, because it is to God only to whom we owe the choicest of our affections; and therefore, whatsoever we love most, to that we give what is proper and peculiar to the true God: and so, though it be not a God in itself, yet we make it one in our esteem; and therefore, every one that loves any thing more than Jehovah, hath other gods before him. Know ye, then, of a certainty, that every soul amongst you that loves any thing more than God, or doth not love God more than all things, is a cursed idolater. Thou worshippest a false, instead of a true God. Dost thou, therefore, love riches more than God? It is the mammon of unrighteousness that is thy God. Is it the pleasures thou lovest more than God? Then pleasures are thy God. Is it an husband or wife thou lovest more than God? Then it is thy husband or wife that is thy God. Is it thy children, thy liberty, thy health, thy credit, thy sins, thy life, that thou lovest more than the great God? *These, these are thy gods, these are the deities*

Dei cultus, hæc vestra religio ; hæc recta pietas ; hæc tantum Deo debita servitus. “What is here commanded, but to love God ? This is the worship of God ; this is true religion ; this is right piety ; this is the service due only unto God.” And therefore ye in vain pretend to be religious, or to worship the true God, unless you love him above all things. This is the worship that he requireth from you, and this is the worship that you owe to him : do this, and then you serve the true God ; leave this undone, and do what you will besides, you are still idolaters ; for it is first,

3dly. In performance. A man can perform no other command, until he first perform this ; thou canst not pray, nor read, nor hear, nor give alms, thou canst do nothing as thou oughtest to do, unless thou first lovest God ; for there is nothing good, but what proceeds from love to the chiefest good ; nothing is accepted by God, but what is grounded upon love to him. Thou mayest pray thy tongue and hear thy ears to the very stumps ; thou mayest fast thy body into a skeleton, and make thy couch to swim continually in thy tears ; thou mayest bestow thy estate wholly upon the poor, and give thy body to be burned ; thou mayest live like an angel, and die like a serpent ; yet, let me tell thee, without love to God it signifies nothing : thy tears will be all rejected, thy prayers slighted, thy alms despised, and all thy performances disregarded, as things nothing worth, unless they proceed from love to God ; and therefore saith the Apostle, “If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity,” &c. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. What charity doth he

speak of? Certainly, love or charity to God, and for God's sake to men; without this thou mayest fill the air with sighs, the heavens with groans, the sea with tears, and yet find no favour or acceptance in the sight of God: no, thou must first love him above all things, before thou canst do any thing pleasing to him; not only because all the duties to him cannot be equivalent to the one horrid sin thou committest against him, in loving other things before him, but also because it is this love to God only that performs all other duties; without which God will never smell a sweet savour from them. What, therefore, though thou prayest? what though thou readest? what though thou hearest? what though thou comest to church? what though thou performest all other duties unto God? if thou omittest this, thou hadst as good do nothing. For there is not a duty thou performest without this, that there is any thing of good, but a great deal of evil in it. Oh, therefore, as ever you desire to do anything pleasing unto God, you must first love him above all things. There is not the greatest duty, but, without this, will certainly be rejected; and there is not the least, but, with it, will certainly be accepted.

2. It is the greatest too, as well as the first commandment. For,

1. It is that to which all the rest tend. This is, as it were, the sea into which the other commands, as the lesser rivers, do all empty themselves. Not as if, in respect of the lawgiver, one is greater than another, for the same God commanded them all; but because all the rest are but as it were so many branches of this:

so that there is not any of the rest but tend to the advancement of this. And therefore, we cannot perform any other commands aright, unless our eye be fixed upon this.

2dly. It is that under which the rest are all contained; so that a man that doth not love God, can do nothing; whilst he that doth love God, doth all things that are required of him; for, as the Apostle saith, "All the law," to wit, of the second table, "is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Gal. v. 14. So we may well say all, both Law and Gospel, is fulfilled in this one word, Thou shalt love the Lord above thy self, and all things else: so that he that doth not perform this one command, cannot perform the other; but he that performeth this, cannot but perform the rest.

3dly. It is that in which they all end. Praying, and hearing, and repenting; faith, and hope, and sorrow; yea, all the other commands, will end with us, and so resolve themselves into this one which shall never end; for "charity never faileth." 1 Cor. xiii. 8. And therefore it is said (v. 13.), "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity:" because this is that in which the other are contained, and this is that which will continue when the other are all ceased.

2dly. Consider, that love to God will make all other duties easy. To him that doth not love God, the easiest duty is difficult; to him that doth love him, *the difficultest* duty is easy. For love is of that *quality*, that it makes us divest ourselves of our former

Psalm cxxii. Yea, "a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Psalm lxxxiv. 10. Thus will it be with thee; though perhaps now that thou hast no love, but rather hatred for God, thou thinkest it tedious and irksome to pray and hear, and sit so long in the house of God; but let me tell thee, if ever God be pleased to raise up thy affections to himself, the hardest duty will be as easy as ever the easiest duty was hard unto thee; thou wilt take as much, yea more delight in drawing nigh to God, than ever thou didst in running from him. And therefore, if ever thou wouldest have the paths of wisdom pleasant, the ways of holiness delightsome to thee, thou must endeavour to get thy heart emptied of its love to sin, which as yet it is filled with, and filled with the love of God, of which as yet it is empty.

3dly. If thou lovest God, "all things shall work together for thy good." Rom. viii. 28. So long as thou lovest any thing more than God, there is not the best of thy seeming goods but are real evils to thee; whereas if thou lovest him above all things, there is not the worst of thy seeming evils but shall be real goods unto thee. Oh, then, who would love any thing more than God, to have his very mercies turned into miseries? Who would not love God more than all things, to have his very miseries turned into mercies?

4thly. It is the work of angels, and the happiness of heaven. This is that crown of glory we all expect *to have set upon our heads when we arrive at our
s kingdom: gold and silver there is none, but*

selfishness, and to be inconsiderate of our own concerns, in comparison of his we love. How do inflamed lovers lay aside the thoughts of health, of quiet, liberty, life, and any thing for the enjoyment and pleasing of the party they love? It is so in temporals; and certainly, then, much more in spirituals. If thy heart be set upon God, thou wilt think nothing too great for him, no duty too great to undertake, no misery too heavy to undergo, for him whom thy soul loveth. Thus the spouse in the Canticles, her soul being inflamed with love to Christ, she forgets her rest, her sleep, her ease, her quiet, to find him she loved; "she sought him upon her bed, in the streets, in the broad way, every where to find him." Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3. And so thou, if thou dost indeed love God, wilt count all things as loss, and dross, and dung in comparison of him. Friends, relations, estate, preferments, health, strength, liberty, life, thou wilt look upon these things as not worthy to come into competition with God. And therefore thou wilt not baulk the least duty imaginable for the attainment of the highest glory conceivable. What is the reason you are so loth to pray, loth to hear, loth to read the Scriptures, loth to give alms, loth to repent, and loth to perform other duties? And what is the reason you are so backward to these duties, and those duties are so hard to you? Why, the reason is, because you do not love God. If you loved him, it would not be your trouble, but your joy, to come before him. Thus David: "I rejoiced when they said unto me, Let us go up to the house of the Lord."

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joy and love to God. Oh, how shall our hearts be transported with it! And, certainly, for all the low conceits that you and I may have of true love to God, certainly the angels and glorified saints find it to be the richest treasure in all their kingdoms. So that if you love God, you may antedate heaven, and bring down those joys to you, before God takes you up to them.

5thly. Love to God is the best evidence of our title to the crown of glory. If there be any flaw or defect in your love to God, all your other evidences will be of no force; but if thy love to God be true and cordial, thou hast as sure a title to the joys of heaven, as thou hast to thy estate upon earth; and thou hast never an evidence can more firmly prove thy interest in what thou hast here, than true love to God will evidence thy title to what thou hopest for hereafter. For if thy love to God be true love, thy other graces are all true graces; thy repentance is true repentance, thy faith true faith, thy humility true humility; and if thy graces be true on earth, thy glory must needs be great in heaven. And therefore, if you would know whether you have any title to heaven, consider what love you have to God on earth. And assure thyself, when thou and I shall be summoned at the grand assize to bring in our evidences for the kingdom of heaven, whatsoever other evidences we bring, unless we bring this, even love to God above all things, the rest will all signify nothing. This one evidence is enough without all other; and all other are nothing without this.

love to him. And certainly, though the principal reason why we should love God is, because he is so infinitely good in himself, yet the principal motive of our love to him is the consideration of what continual goodness he hath shewn to us. For we are more sensible of those streams of goodness that flow from him, than of the fountain of goodness that is in him. We cannot see how good he is in himself, but we daily see how good he is to us; and it is our eye principally that affects our hearts. So that, though we are to love him principally for what he is in himself, yet the best means to raise up our affections, so as to love him for what he is in himself, is the consideration of the manifold expressions of his love to us.

2dly. The Scripture doth give us sufficient warrant to love him for what he doth for us, as well as for what he is in himself; though we are still principally to love him for what he is in himself rather than for what he is to us.

Give me leave to instance in these three or four places.

1st. "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my prayers." Psalm cxvi. 1. This was the reason why he loved God's person, because God had heard his prayer.

2dly. "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John, iv. 19. Not only we love him, because he deserves love from us; but we love him, because he first loved us. Therefore, because he loves us, therefore we do love him; and therefore the consideration of his love to us is one reason of our love to him.

leave doting upon toys, and to “love the Lord your God with all your hearts,” for my part I know not what others can. Well, then,

1st. Consider God’s love to you, or how much you are engaged to him for what he hath done for you. But before I make a further progress into this consideration, it will be first necessary to remove a stumbling-block which lies in our way. For, may some of you say, have you not taught us all along that we must love God more than all things? Whereas if we love him only for what he hath done for us, we shall love ourselves more than him. For by this means, our eye being fixed principally upon ourselves, we should mind ourselves only, and him no further than as he is beneficial to us, not at all as he is transcendently glorious in himself; and so, our affections being so mercenary and selfish, they cannot possibly be filial and sincere. And how can it be lawful for us thus to eye ourselves more than him, or him only in respect to ourselves?

To this I answer —

1st. We must distinguish betwixt the occasion and scope of our love; that which first draws my love to him, and that which afterwards fixeth my love upon him. I do not say, this is the great reason why we ought to love God; for, certainly, he infinitely more deserves our love for what he is in himself than for what he is to us. For the expressions of his love to us are but finite, whereas the perfections of his loveliness in himself are infinite. But, howsoever, I may make use of this consideration, as a motive to stir up your

love to him. And certainly, though the principal reason why we should love God is, because he is so infinitely good in himself, yet the principal motive of our love to him is the consideration of what continual goodness he hath shown to us. For we are more sensible of those streams of goodness that flow from him, than of the fountain of goodness that is in him. We cannot see how good he is in himself, but we daily see how good he is to us; and it is our eye principally that affects our hearts. So that, though we are to love him principally for what he is in himself, yet the best means to raise up our affections, so as to love him for what he is in himself, is the consideration of the manifold expressions of his love to us.

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8dly. "Her sins be forgiven : therefore she loved much." Luke vii. 47. For though we read, indeed "for she loved much," yet the other seems to be the truer exposition of them. For the Greek word *ὅτι* will well bear that sense, and the scope of the place will scarce admit of any other ; for our Saviour is here giving the reason why Mary had expressed so much love to him, even because he had expressed so much love to her, in the forgiving of her sins. He did not therefore, forgive her her many sins because she loved much ; but therefore she loved much, because he had forgiven her so many sins. And, indeed, the antithesis in the same verse requires this interpretation : " But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little ;" which antithesis plainly implies the foregoing thesis to be, he to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much ; not, he that loveth much, to the same much is forgiven. And, indeed, the analogy of faith requires it too ; for God doth not pardon our sins because we love him ; but rather we love him, because he pardons our sins. But

4thly. That we may love God for his goodness to us is plain from the words of my text, too : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ;" so that we are not only to love him as he is the Lord, but as he is our God. " Thou shalt love the Lord ;" that implies that we must love him for what he is in himself. " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ;" that denotes that we are to love him for what he is to us.

Well, then, seeing we may love the Lord for what he hath done for us, let us a little consider with ourselves what he hath done for us for which we

thus love him. And whilst I shall speak of the love of God, let your hearts be inflamed with love to him. As one candle lights another, so let the flames of love in God to you light the like flames of love in you to him. Consider,

1st. It was God that raised thee out of nothing. Had he not made thee, thou hadst not been. Alas! from all eternity thou wast nothing; and hadst been so still, had not he caused thee to spring up like a tender bud, testifying from whence thou camest, and upon whom thou dependest, by the inability to help thyself. Had not he raised thee out of the bed of nothing, thou hadst, to this moment, lain sleeping in it, not knowing any, nor known by any; and what should move God to put forth his everlasting arms, and bring thee out of this barren womb? Was it because thou lovedst him? Poor creature! Thou, who wast not, how couldst thou love? Or, if thou hadst loved any thing, certainly nothing less than him, who was infinitely contrary, yea, contradictory to thine eternal nothingness. Yet, though thou couldst not love him, yet he could and did love thee; yea, he so loved thee, that hadst no being, that he gave thee a being, wherein to love himself — a being, I say, not that of plants or brutes; but he endowed thee with a rational soul, upon the face whereof he stamped his own image, giving thee an understanding whereby to know him, a will whereby to choose him, affections whereby to love him, that gave them all unto thee. So that, as, if he had not made thee, thou couldst have been nothing; so, unless he had enabled thee, thou couldst never have loved any thing. It was he

3dly. "Her sins be forgiven : therefore she loved much." Luke vii. 47. For though we read, indeed, "for she loved much," yet the other seems to be the truer exposition of them. For the Greek word *ὅτι* will well bear that sense, and the scope of the place will scarce admit of any other ; for our Saviour is here giving the reason why Mary had expressed so much love to him, even because he had expressed so much love to her, in the forgiving of her sins. He did not, therefore, forgive her her many sins because she loved much ; but therefore she loved much, because he had forgiven her so many sins. And, indeed, the antithesis in the same verse requires this interpretation : " But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little ;" which antithesis plainly implies the foregoing thesis to be, he to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much ; not, he that loveth much, to the same much is forgiven. And, indeed, the analogy of faith requires it too ; for God doth not pardon our sins because we love him ; but rather we love him, because he pardons our sins. But,

4thly. That we may love God for his goodness to us is plain from the words of my text, too : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ;" so that we are not only to love him as he is the Lord, but as he is our God. " Thou shalt love the Lord ;" that implies that we must love him for what he is in himself. " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ;" that denotes that we are to love him for what he is to us.

Well, then, seeing we may love the Lord for what he hath done for us, let us a little consider with ourselves *what he hath done for us for which we should*

thus love him. And whilst I shall speak of the love of God, let your hearts be inflamed with love to him. As one candle lights another, so let the flames of love in God to you light the like flames of love in you to him. Consider,

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Art thou not a drunkard? Art thou not a thief? Yea, art thou not a blasphemer? Art thou not an atheist? Not to thyself, not to thyself; but to the name of God give the praise and glory. For as it is only God's constraining grace that enableth thee to do the good thou dost; so it is only God's restraining grace that prevents thee from doing the evil thou dost not. And therefore thou art bound to love God both for what thou art, and for what thou art not; for what thou dost, and for what thou dost not.

4thly. It is he also that directs thee in all thy way and prospers thee in thy undertakings. "It is not man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. x. 23. No, it is God only that directs our steps for us. When thou art in doubts and perplexities, and knowest not which way to take, it is God that is as a voice behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk in it." It is he that enlightens thy understanding, quickens thy apprehensions, and directs thy thoughts, ordering the spirit in thy brain, that those may occur which are most advantageous and beneficial. If thou beest rich, it is he that directed thee to the means thou wert to use, and then prospered thee in the using of them. At whatsoever thy condition now be, the whole chain of causes, and series of providences, that hath brought thee from thy mother's womb unto what thou art, is arranged and managed only by his almighty power. That thou art nothing, thou dost nothing, thou art nothing, but what thou art beholden for. Is it by labour and industry that thou hast gotten thy estate? Who was it that made thee thus laborious?

unless he enabled thee. Oh, then, how infinitely art thou engaged to love him above all things, without whom thou couldst neither have any thing to love, nor love any thing thou hast; without whom neither thou that lovest it, nor the thing thou lovest, could continue one moment in its being.

3dly. As it is he that preserves you in your beings, so it is he that protects you from evil; without him, thou couldst not but fall down to nothing; and without him, all evil would fall down upon thee. It is he alone who gives good things to thee; and it is he alone who withholdeth evils from thee. Oh, how many unseen dangers doth he continually keep us from? How often had that "roaring lion," the devil, before now, devoured us, had not the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" rescued us? How oft have we been upon the brink of ruin, but that it was God that kept us from falling in? How art thou engaged to God for every good thing thou hast, and for every evil thing thou hast not? It is of his mercy that thou art preserved, and it is of his mercy that thou art not consumed. Unless he had loved thee more than thou lovest him, there is nothing that is good but would have been kept from thee, there is nothing that is evil but would have been thrown upon thee. It is only from him that thou art here, and not upon thy sick bed; here, and not in prison; yea, here, and not in hell. Neither is it he only that defends thee from temporal, but from spiritual evils; for, without God, as there is no misery but would fall upon thee, so there is no sin but thou wouldst fall into. Art thou not a murderer? Art thou not an adulterer?

them that borrowed their lives from him? Oh, how can you think of these things, and keep your hearts within your breasts? How are we able to consider how much God hath done for us, and not burn in love to him? Oh, ye that love yourselves, your sins, your lusts, your friends, your lives, or any thing more than God, behold the Most High himself mocked, despised, spit upon, crowned with thorns, drinking gall and vinegar, and, last of all, undergoing the pangs of death and all to redeem you to the joys of love. Consider these things, and then tell me whether he doth not infinitely deserve your love more than the things that have it? Consider that he assumed thy nature, that thou mightest partake of his; he became the son of man, that thou mightest become the son of God; he hungered, that he might feed thee with his own flesh, and thirsted, that he might give thee to drink of his own blood; he was apprehended, that thou mightest be secure; he was derided, that thou mightest be honoured; he was condemned, that thou mightest be absolved; and he was crowned with thorns here, that thou mightest be crowned with glory hereafter. He came from heaven to earth, that thou mightest go from earth to heaven. Yea, "that which knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might know nothing but sin might be made the righteousness of God in him." He, who was innocent, was punished that thou, who art guilty, mightest be pardoned. He was crucified, that thou mightest be glorified. He, who had lived in heaven from eternity, came and died on earth in time, that we, who die on earth in time, may go and live in heaven to eternity. Oh, how can

dustrious, but God? Is it by thy gifts and parts ~~that~~ thou art advanced to preferments? Who was it ~~that~~ gave thee those gifts and parts, but God? Hast thou great friends and many lovers in the world? Who was it that made them thy friends and lovers, but God? It was he that gave Joseph favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Gen. xxxix. 21. It was he that brought Daniel into favour and love with the prince of the eunuchs. Dan. i. 9. So that as without him we could not love others; so without him others would not love us. And therefore, the more others love thee, the more art thou bound to love God.

5thly. As if all this was nothing, God, to manifest himself still further to thee, came down from his blessed throne, clothed himself with flesh, became subject to his own creatures, yea, and unto death itself, and all to redeem thee from it. Oh, glorious condescension! Oh, ravishing expression of divine love! That eternity should stoop to time, heaven come down to earth, glory be wrapped in misery; that God himself should become man, and all to reconcile man to himself! Oh, “what is man, that thou shouldst be thus mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou shouldst be thus merciful to him?” Who are we, or what was our father’s house, that God himself should not only become man, but suffer for us, and undergo cruelties, reproaches, and stripes from those that could not lay them upon him did not he at the same time enable them? that he should be condemned by such as could not pronounce *the sentence* against him did not himself vouchsafe them *breath* to do it? yea, that he should suffer death from

them that borrowed their lives from him? Oh, how can you think of these things, and keep your hearts within your breasts? How are we able to consider how much God hath done for us, and not burn in love to him? Oh, ye that love yourselves, your sins, your lusts, your friends, your lives, or any thing more than God, behold the Most High himself mocked, despised, spit upon, crowned with thorns, drinking gall and vinegar, and, last of all, undergoing the pangs of death, and all to redeem you to the joys of love. Consider, I say, these things, and then tell me whether he doth not infinitely deserve your love more than the things that have it? Consider that he assumed thy nature, that thou mightest partake of his; he became the son of man, that thou mightest become the son of God; he hungered, that he might feed thee with his own flesh; and thirsted, that he might give thee to drink of his own blood; he was apprehended, that thou mightest be secure; derided, that thou mightest be honoured; condemned, that thou mightest be absolved; and crowned with thorns here, that thou mightest be crowned with glory hereafter. He came from heaven to earth, that thou mightest go from earth to heaven. Yea, "He that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we that know nothing but sin might be made the righteousness of God in him." He, who was innocent, was punished, that thou, who art guilty, mightest be pardoned. He was crucified, that thou mightest be glorified. He, who had lived in heaven from eternity, came and died on earth in time, that we, who die on earth in time, might go and live in heaven to eternity. Oh, how canst thou

muse of these things, and the fire not burn within thee? Where is thy heart, that thou dost not throw it, all on flames with love, at the foot of that God that hath done so much for thee?

6thly. He did not only come down once to die for thee, but he is still pleased to come down and live within the. He did not only assume our human, but we partake of his divine nature. And if it be an honour for the king to remove a subject to his court, what an honour it is to remove his court to his subject! If it be an honour for God to take us up to live with him; oh, what an honour is it for him to come down and live in us! Yet this honour have all his saints. “Know ye not (saith the Apostle) that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” 1 Cor. iii. 16. Oh, what expression of love can you desire more from God, or God bestow more on you? But tell me, my brethren, seeing He that inhabits eternity vouchsafeth also to come and dwell in you; what can you do less than receive him into the uppermost corner of your hearts, and entertain him with the choicest of your affections? Seeing he is pleased to live in you, how can you forbear loving of him?

7thly. Consider further what God hath laid up for you in heaven, as well as what he hath vouchsafed to you on earth. His mercies upon earth are infinitely more than you do deserve; but the glory he hath prepared for you in heaven is infinitely greater than you *can imagine*. “For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to con-

thou slightest and disregardest. And verily, for all the low undervaluing thoughts you have as yet of heaven, so as to prefer the seeming pleasures upon earth before it, assure yourselves, if God shall be ever pleased to bring you to it, you will be of another mind. Nay, let me tell you, you must be of another mind before you are ever likely to come there. Much more when you shall once be possessed of the actual enjoyment of those transcendent glories, which I am as unable to express as desirous to enjoy, you will then think the highest of your affections infinitely too low for that God who hath provided such mansions for you.

8thly. If thy frozen heart be not as yet dissolved into love and affection to the great God for these wonderful expressions of his love to thee, consider his ends in all these things. Alas! he aims at nothing in all this for himself, but all for thee. It is he only that does the work; but it is we only that receive the gains. For, before the world or any part of it had a being, God was brim full of glory, infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, being all joy and bliss, all honour and glory, yea, all things desirable to himself. So that, before he had made his creatures, he stood in no need of them, he is never the better for them. He was infinitely happy in himself before, and cannot be more happy in us now. Neither did he make creatures out of any such design to be anything advanced in his happiness by them, or to receive any accessions of glory from them; but merely out of his own essential goodness, which is naturally communicative of itself, even as the sun is naturally diffusive of its light, though

he get nothing by it: and therefore, whether thou beest damned, he is not the worse; or whether thou beest saved, he is never the better for it. But, howsoever, out of his own intrinsical goodness he hath made thee, and upon the same account is desirous to make thee happy; and if thou acceptest of the overtures of grace he makes thee, it is thou that receivest the happiness, not he. It is true, he is the good husbandman that breaks up the fallow ground of thy heart, and sows the seed of grace in it. It is he, also, that waters, and weeds, and dresseth it, and causeth it to spring up and flourish; but when all is done, it is thou only that reapest and receivest the whole crop of glory from it: and therefore thou must not think that he hath any ends in loving thee; he only loves thee because he loves thee. Deut. vii. 8. And now that he calls upon thee to love him, it is not because he wants thy love, but because thyself wantest it: for it is no addition to his glory, but it is the perfection of thine to love him with all thy heart. Oh! how art thou able to consider these things, and not be forced to cry out with the spouse in the Canticles, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love?" Cant. ii. 5.

2dly. Neither doth God only deserve your love because he hath been so loving unto you, but especially because he is infinitely lovely in himself. And, certainly, though God doth give us leave to love him for these astonishing instances of his goodness to us, yet he requires us especially to love him for that bottomless ocean of goodness that is in himself. And verily, for

all the low apprehensions that we may have of the eternal Deity, did it but please the most high God to open our eyes, and show us that glory that shines round about us at this time, how should we all lie grovelling in the dust before him, and our souls be melted into holy desires and pantings after him?

When the Syrians came to Dothan, the servant of the prophet Elisha could see nothing but the chariots and horses of the Syrians. But when God had opened his eyes, "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." 2 Kings, vi. 17. So here, you look about you from place to place, but can see nothing but your fellow creatures about you; but if God would be pleased but to open your eyes, as he did the servant of Elisha's, "Behold, the place is full of horses, and chariots of fire;" yea, it is full of the glory of the great God; whom if we could but see, how would our hearts be even snatched from us, and our souls transported wholly into flames of love? And though these ravishments of love, from the sight of God, may seem paradoxes and mysteries to deluded mortals; yet, certainly, could you and I but look upon this glorious object with the same eyes wherewith Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Peter and Paul, and the rest of the celestial hierarchy, do continually, and at this very moment, behold him, how should we all be raised beyond our former selves? How should we immediately throw our melted, ravished, inflamed hearts at the feet of such transcendent glory? Certainly, did we thus *behold him*, we should be as much unable to keep off *our affections* from him, as now we are to draw them

up unto him ; and it would be as impossible as it is unjust, to let any thing come into competition with him.

I know you expect I should speak something in particular in the praise of those amazing and enamouring perfections that are in God, which thus deserve the choicest of our affections from us. But verily you must excuse me ; for I am conscious to myself that my highest celebrations of them would be but as so many detractions from them. Only let me tell you this in general : if ever it shall please this, the chiefest Good, to discover himself unto you, and display his glory before you, you will find him to be the source of wisdom, the abyss of goodness, the rule of holiness, the very centre of all perfections ; one who doth not only possess infinite perfections, but one in whom every perfection is infinite ; one so amiable, so desirable, so pure, so perfect, so altogether lovely, that, had we no relation to him, had we received no expressions of love from him, yet his bare essence, his native excellencies, could not but make us ravished and enamoured with him ; one so altogether lovely, that the glorified angels, from the beginning of the world to this moment, could see nothing, either in or out of him, to lessen their affections to him. Yea, one whom to behold, and love, and praise, will be our happiness for evermore ; and therefore one whom though thou shouldst sift and rack thy brains to eternity, to find out some exceptions against him, or some excuse for thy withholding thy affections from him, it would be impossible.

And therefore be it known unto you, that every soul *amongst you* that doth not love God above all

things, therefore does it not, because he doth not know him. For, as thou canst not love him unless thou knowest him, thou couldst not but love him if thou knowedst him. Let not the deceitful world, then, cheat thee any longer of thy affections; but let him be the centre who was the author of them. Dote no longer upon these childish gewgaws, but fix thy love upon the chiefest Good. And seeing he hath called for thy heart from thee, what canst thou do but throw it before him, all open, all melted, all on fire with love unto himself, without keeping back the least spark of love to any thing else, but only in subordination unto him? Raise up, therefore, thy affections to him, and fix thy love continually upon him; never give over heaving at thy heart until thou hast gotten it up to him, who so infinitely deserves the choicest of thy affections, not only for those expressions of love which he hath shown to thee, but for those attractives of love which are all concentrated in himself.

ON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

[ISAAC BARROW, D.D.]

MATT. xxii. 39.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

THE essential goodness of God, and his special benignity toward mankind, are, to a considering mind, divers ways very apparent: the frame of the world, and the natural course of things, do with a thousand voices loudly and clearly proclaim them to us; every sense doth yield us affidavit to that speech of the holy Psalmist, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord^a:" we see it in the glorious brightness of the skies, and in the pleasant verdure of the fields; we taste it in the various delicacies of food, supplied by land and sea; we smell it in the fragrances of herbs and flowers; we hear it in the natural music of the woods; we feel it in the comfortable warmth of heaven, and in the cheering freshness of the air; we continually do possess and enjoy it in the numberless accommodations of life, presented to us by the bountiful hand of nature.

^a Psalm xxxiii. 5. ; cxix. 64.

Of the same goodness we may be well assured by that common Providence which continually doth uphold us in our being, doth opportunely relieve our needs, doth protect us in dangers, and rescue us from imminent mischiefs, doth comport with our infirmities and misdemeanours; the which, in the divine Psalmist's style ^a, "doth hold our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved;" doth "redeem our life from destruction;" doth "crown us with loving-kindness, and tender mercies."

The dispensations of grace, in the revelation of heavenly truth, in the overtures of mercy, in the succours of our weakness, in the proposal of glorious rewards, in all the methods and means conducing to our salvation, do afford most admirable proofs and pledges of the same immense benignity.

But in nothing is the divine goodness toward us more illustriously conspicuous, than in the nature and tendency of those laws which God hath been pleased, for the regulation of our lives, to prescribe unto us, all which do palpably evidence his serious desire and provident care of our welfare; so that, in imposing them, he plainly doth not so much exercise his sovereignty over us, as express his kindness toward us; neither do they more clearly declare his will, than demonstrate his good-will toward us.

And, among all divine precepts, this especially, contained in my text, doth argue the wonderful goodness of our heavenly Lawgiver, appearing both in the manner of the proposal, and in the substance of it.

^a Psalm lxvi. 9. ; lvi. 13. ; ciii. 4. ; cxlv. 16.

“The second,” saith our Lord ^a, “is like to it;” that is, to the precept of “loving the Lord our God with all our heart:” and is not this a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth in such a manner commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty toward him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbour as to love himself?

He is transcendently amiable for the excellency of his nature; he, by innumerable and inestimable benefits graciously conferred on us, hath deserved our utmost affection; so that, naturally, there can be no obligation bearing any proportion or considerable semblance to that of loving him: yet hath he in goodness been pleased to create one, and to endue it with that privilege; making the love of a man (whom we cannot value but for his gifts, to whom we can owe nothing but what properly we owe to him) no less obligatory, to declare it near as acceptable as the love of himself, to whom we owe all. To him, as the sole author and free donor of all our good, by just correspondence, all our mind and heart, all our strength and endeavour, are due; and reasonably might he engross them to himself, excluding all other beings from any share in them; so that we might be obliged only to fix our thoughts and set our affections on him, only to act directly for his honour and interest; saying, with the holy Psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee^b”; yet doth he freely please to impart a share of these performances on mankind; yet doth he

^a Luke x. 27.

^b Psalm lxxiii. 25.

charge us to place our affection on one another; to place it there, indeed, in a measure so large, that we can hardly imagine a greater; according to a rule, than which none can be devised more complete or certain.

O marvellous condescension! O goodness truly divine! which surpasseth the nature of things, which dispenseth with the highest right, and foregoeth the greatest interest that can be! Doth not God in a sort debase himself, that he might advance us? Doth he not appear to waive his own due, and neglect his own honour, for our advantage? How, otherwise, could the love of man be capable of any resemblance to the love of God, and not stand at an infinite distance, or in an extreme disparity from it? How, otherwise, could we be obliged to affect or regard any thing beside the sovereign, the only goodness? How, otherwise, could there be any “second or like to” that “first,” that “great^a,” that peerless command, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?”^b

This, indeed, is the highest commendation whereof any law is capable: for, as to be like God is the highest praise that can be given to a person; so to resemble the divinest law of love to God is the fairest character that can be assigned of a law: the which, indeed, representeth it to be *νόμος βασιλικός*, as St. James calleth it; that is, a “royal^c” and sovereign law, exalted above all others, and bearing a sway on them. St. Paul telleth us, that “the end of the commandment (or the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) is “charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith un-

^a Matt. xix. 17.

^b Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

^c James, ii. 8.

'eigned^a;" that charity is "the sum^b" and substance of all other duties, and that "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the whole law^c;" that charity is the chief of the theological virtues^d, and "the prime fruit of the divine Spirit^e;" and "the bond of perfection^f," which combineth and consummateth all other graces, and the general principle of all our doings. St. Peter enjoineth us that to all other virtues we "add charity^g," as the top and crown of them; and, "above all things," saith he, "have fervent charity among yourselves."^h St. John calleth this law, in way of excellence, "the commandment of Godⁱ;" and our Lord himself claimeth it as his peculiar precept: "This," saith he, "is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you^k;" "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another^l;" and maketh the observance of it the special cognizance of his followers: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."^m

These, indeed, are lofty commendations thereof, yet all of them may worthily veil to this; all of them seem verified in virtue of this, because God hath vouchsafed to place this command in so near adjacency to the first great law, conjoining the two tables; making charity contiguous, and as it were commensurate, to piety.

It is true that, in many respects, charity doth resemble piety; for it is the most genuine daughter of

^a 1 Tim. i. 5.^b Rom. xiii. 8, 9.^c Gal. v. 14.^d 1 Cor. xiii. 13.^e Gal. v. 22.^f Col. iii. 14. 1 Cor. xvi. 14.^g 2 Pet. i. 7.^h 1 Pet. iv. 8.ⁱ 1 John, iii. 23, 11.; iv. 21.^k John, xv. 12.^l John, xiii. 34.^m John, xiii. 35.

piety; thence, in complexion, in features, in humour, much favouring its sweet mother: it doth consist in like dispositions and motions of soul; it doth grow from the same roots and principles of benignity, ingenuity, equity, gratitude, planted in our original constitution by the breath of God, and improved in our hearts by the divine “Spirit of love^a”; it produceth the like fruits of beneficence toward other, and of comfort in ourselves; it, in like manner, doth assimilate us to God, rendering us conformable to his nature, followers of his practice, and partakers of his felicity; it is of like use and consequence toward the regulation of our practice, and due management of our whole life: in such respects, I say, this law is like to the other; but it is, however, chiefly so, for that God hath pleased to lay so great stress thereon as to make it the other half of our religion and duty^b; or because, as St. John saith, “This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also^c”; which is, to his praise, a most pregnant demonstration of his immense goodness towards us.

But no less in the very substance of this duty will the benignity of him that prescribeth it shine forth, displaying itself in the rare beauty and sweetness of it, together with the vast benefit and utility which it, being observed, will yield to mankind; which will appear by what we may discourse for pressing its observance. But, first, let us explain it as it lieth before us expressed in the words of the text, wherein we shall

^a 1 John, iv. 7. 13. Matt. v. 45. Eph. v. 1, 2.

^b Matt. xxii. 40.

^c 1 John, iv. 21.

consider two particulars observable: first, the object of the duty; secondly, the qualification annexed to it: the object of it, "our neighbour;" the qualification, "ourselves."

I. The object of charity is "our neighbour;" that is (it being understood, as the precept now concerneth us according to our Lord's exposition, or according to his intent and the tenor of his doctrine,) every man with whom we have to do, or who is capable of our love, especially every Christian.

The Law, as it was given to God's ancient people, did openly regard only those among them who were linked together in a holy neighbourhood or society from which all other men being excluded were deemed strangers and foreigners ("aliens," as St. Paul speaks "from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise"). For thus the law runneth in Leviticus^b: "Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" where, plainly, Jews and "neighbours" are terms equivalent, other men being supposed to stand at distance without the fold or politic inclosure, which God by several ordinances had fenced, keep that nation unmixed and separate^c; nor can it be excepted in this notion, that the same law is enjoined, "But the stranger that dwelleth among you shall be unto you as one of yourselves: ye shall love him as thyself."

^a Eph. ii. 12.

^b Levit. xii. 28.

^c Levit. xix. 34.

the Jewish masters will interpret it) is meant a proselyte of righteousness, or one who, although a stranger by birth, was yet a brother in religion, having voluntarily submitted to their Law, being engaged in the same covenant, and thence admitted to the same privileges as an adopted child of that holy family.

But now, such distinctions of men being voided, and that “wall of partition^a” demolished, all the world is become one people, subject to the laws of one common Lord, and capable of the mercies purchased by one Redeemer.^b God’s love to mankind did move him to send our Lord into the world^c, to assume human nature, and therein to become a mediator between God and men.^d Our Lord’s kindness to all his brethren disposed him to undertake their salvation, and to expiate their sins^e, and “to taste death for every man^f”; the effect whereof is an universal reconciliation of God to the world^g, and an union of men together.

Now the blood of Christ hath cemented mankind; the favour of God, embracing all, hath approximated and combined all together; so that now every man is our brother, not only by nature, as derived from the same stock, but by grace, as partaker of the common redemption. Now, God desiring “the salvation of all men^h,” and inviting all men to mercy, our duty must be co-extended with God’s grace, and our charity must follow that of our Saviour.

^a Eph. ii. 14. Gal. iii. 28. Acts, x. 35.

^b Tit. iii. 4.

^c John iii. 16.

^d 1 Tim. ii. 5.

^e 1 John ii. 2.

^f Heb. ii. 9.

^g 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 20.

Eph. i. 10.; ii. 13.

^h 1 Tim. ii. 4. Tit. ii. 11. Col. i. 23.

We are therefore now to all men that which one Jew was to another; yea, more than such, our Christianity having induced much higher obligations, stricter alliances, and stronger endearments, than were those whereby Judaism did engage its followers to mutual amity. The duties of common humanity (to which our natural frame and sense do incline us, which philosophy recommendeth and natural religion doth prescribe being grounded upon our community of nature and cognation of blood, upon apparent equity, upon general convenience and utility) our religion doth not only enforce and confirm, but enhance and improve; superadding higher instances and faster ties of spiritual relation, reaching in a sort to all men (as being in duty, in design, in remote capacity, our spiritual brethren), but in especial manner to all Christians, who actually are fellow-members of the same holy fraternity, contracted by spiritual regeneration from one heavenly seed, supported by a common faith and hope, strengthened by communion in acts of devotion and charity.^a

Hereon, therefore, are grounded those evangelical commands explicatory of this law as it now standeth in force; that “as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith^b”; that we “should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men^c”; that we “should glorify God in our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, by liberally distributing to the saints, and to all men^d”; that we should “follow peace

^a 1 Pet. i. 23. ; ii. 17.

^c 1 Thes. iii. 12.

^b Gal. vi. 10.

^d 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.

with all men^a," should "be patient toward all men^b;" and "gentle toward all men," and "show all meekness toward all men^c;" and "ever follow that which is good, both among ourselves and to all men^d;" that we should "make supplications, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all men," especially for "all saints," or all our fellow Christians; and "express moderation," or ingenuity, "to all men."^e

Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord himself expound it, when, by a Jewish lawyer being put to resolve this question, "And who is my neighbour?"^f he did propound a case, or history, whereby he did extort from that Rabbi this confession, that even a Samaritan discharging a notable office of humanity and mercy to a Jew did thereby most truly approve himself a good neighbour to him; and, consequently, that reciprocal performances of such offices were due from a Jew to a Samaritan: whence it might appear that this relation of neighbourhood is universal and unlimited. So much for the object.

II. As for the qualification annexed, and couched in those words, "as thyself;" that, as I conceive, may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a measure determining the quantity, of that love which is due from us to our neighbour; the comparative term "as" implying both conformity or similitude, and commensuration or equality.^g

^a Heb. xii. 14.

^b 1 Thess. v. 14.

^c Tit. iii. 2.

^d 1 Thess. v. 15. *ἡπιον εἶναι πρὸς πάντας.* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

^e 1 Tim. ii. 1. Eph. vi. 18. Phil. iv. 6.

^f Luke x. 29. *Πλησίον δὲ ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ ὁμοιοπαθὲς καὶ λογικὸν ζῶον, &c.* Just. Mart. contr. Tryph. p. 320.

^g *Ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς φιλίας τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁμοιοῦται.* Arist. Eth. ix. 4.

1. Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth import a rule directing what kind of love we should bear an exercise toward him ; or informing us that our charity doth consist in having the same affections of soul, and in performing the same acts of beneficence toward him as we are ready by inclination, as we are wont in practice, to have or to perform toward ourselves, with full approbation of our judgment and conscience, approving it just and reasonable so to do.

We cannot, indeed, better understand the nature of this duty than by reflecting on the motions of our own heart, and observing the course of our demeanour toward ourselves ; for thence infallibly we may be assured how we should stand affected, and how we should behave ourselves toward others.

This is a peculiar advantage of this rule (inferring the excellent wisdom and goodness of him who frame it), that by it very easily and certainly we may discern all the specialities of our duty, without looking abroad or having recourse to external instructions ; so that let it we may be perfect lawgivers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves of what in any case we should do : for every one by internal experience knoweth what it is to love himself ; every one is conscious how he useth to treat himself ; each one, consequently, can prescribe and decide for himself what he ought to do towards his neighbour : so that we are not on *θεοδίδακτοι*, “taught of God,” as the Apostle saith, “

^a Οὐ χρεία πολλῶν λόγων, οὐδὲ μακροτέρων νόμων, οὐδὲ διδασκαλίας ποικίλης· τὸ δέλημά σου γινέσθω νόμος — σὺ γένου δικαστὴς, σὺ νομοθέτης τῆς σεαυτοῦ ζωῆς. Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ιγ’.

love one another^a; but *αὐτοδιδασκτοι*, taught of ourselves, how to exercise that duty; whence our Lord elsewhere doth propose the law of charity in these terms: “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets^b,” that is, unto this rule all the special precepts of charity proposed in Holy Scripture may be reduced.

Wherefore, for information concerning our duty in each case and circumstance, we need only thus to consult and interrogate ourselves; hence forming resolutions concerning our practice.

Do we not much esteem and set by ourselves? Do we not strive to maintain in our minds a good opinion of ourselves? Can any mischances befalling us, any defects observable in us, any faults committed by us, induce us to slight or despise ourselves? This may teach us what regard and value we should ever preserve for our neighbour.

Do we not sincerely and earnestly desire our own welfare and advantage in every kind? Do we not heartily wish good success to our own designs and undertakings? Are we unconcerned or coldly affected in any case touching our own safety, our estate, our credit, our satisfaction, or pleasure? Do we not especially, if we rightly understand ourselves, desire the health and happiness of our souls? This doth inform us what we should wish and covet for our neighbour.^c

^a 1 Thess. iv. 9.

^b Matt. vii. 12. Luke vi. 31. *Ο μισεῖς, μηδενὶ ποιήσης. Tob. iv. 15. Const. Apost. i. 1.

^c *Ο τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπῶν, ὅπερ αὐτῷ βούλεται ἔλαβῃ, ἐκείνῳ βουλήσεται, &c. Just. Mart. contr. Tryph. p. 321.

Have we not a sensible delight and complacency in our own prosperity? Do we ever repine at any advantages accruing to our person or condition? Are we not extremely glad to find ourselves thriving and flourishing in wealth, in reputation, in any accommodation or ornament of our state? Especially, if we be sober and wise, doth not our spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue yield joyous satisfaction to us? Are we not much comforted in apprehending ourselves to proceed in a hopeful way towards everlasting felicity? This may instruct us what content we should feel in our neighbour's prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Do we not seriously grieve at our own disasters and disappointments? Are we not in sad dumps whenever we incur any damage or disgrace? Do not our diseases and pains sorely afflict us? Do we not pity and bemoan ourselves in any want, calamity, or distress? Can we, especially, if we are ourselves, without grievous displeasure apprehend ourselves enslaved to sin and Satan, destitute of God's favour, exposed to endless misery? Hence may we learn how we should condole and commiserate the misfortunes of our neighbour.

Do we not eagerly prosecute our own concerns? Do we not with huge vigour and industry strive to acquire all conveniences and comforts to ourselves, to rid ourselves of all wants and molestations? Is our solicitous care or painful endeavour ever wanting toward the support and succour of ourselves in any of our needs? Are we satisfied in merely wishing ourselves well? Are we not also busy and active in procuring what we affect? Especially, if we are well advised, do we not

effectually provide for the weal of our soul, and supply of our spiritual necessities, labouring to rescue ourselves from ignorance and error, from the tyranny of sin, from the torture of a bad conscience, from the danger of hell? This showeth how ready we should be really to further our neighbour's good, ministering to him all kinds of assistance and relief suitable to his needs, both corporal and spiritual.

Are we so proud or nice that we disdain to yield attendance or service needful for our own sustenance or convenience? Do we not, indeed, gladly perform the meanest and most sordid offices for ourselves? This declareth how condescensive we should be in helping our neighbour, how ready even to wash his feet when occasion doth require.

Do we love to vex ourselves or cross our own humour? do we not rather seek by all means to please and gratify ourselves? This may warn us how innocent and inoffensive, how compliant and complacent we should be in our behaviour toward others, endeavouring "to please them in all things," especially "for their good to edification."^a

Are we easily angry with ourselves? do we retain implacable grudges against ourselves, or do we execute upon ourselves mischievous revenge? Are we not rather very meek and patient towards ourselves, mildly comporting with our own great weaknesses, our troublesome humours, our impertinencies and follies, readily forgiving ourselves the most heinous offences, neglects, affronts, injuries, and outrages committed by us against

^a Rom. xv. 2.

our own interest, honour, and welfare? Hence it we derive lessons of meekness and patience to be exercised towards our neighbour, in bearing his infirmities and miscarriages, in remitting any wrongs or discourses received from him.

Are we apt to be rude in our deportment, harsh our language, or rigorous in our dealing towards ourselves? Do we not rather, in word and deed, treat ourselves very softly, very indulgently? Do we to pry for faults, or to pick quarrels with ourselves, carp at any thing said or done by us, rashly or on slight grounds to charge blame on ourselves, to heap heavy censures on our actions, to make foul constructions of our words, to blazon our defects, or aggravate our failings? Do we not rather connive at and conceal our blemishes? Do we not excuse and extenuate our crimes?

Can we find in our hearts to frame virulent invectives, or to dart bitter taunts and scoffs against ourselves: to murder our own credit by slander, to blaspheme by detraction, to stain it by reproach, to prostitute it to falsehood by flattery and scurrilous abuse?

Can we find in our hearts to stain our reputation, to stain our garment, a

judgment or censure we should be towards our neighbour; how very tender and careful we should be of anywise wronging or hurting his fame.

Thus reflecting on ourselves, and making our practice towards ourselves the pattern of our dealing with others, we shall not fail to discharge what is prescribed to us in this law: and so we have here a rule of charity. But farther,

2. Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth also import the measure of our love towards him; that it should be commensurate and equal in degree to that love which we bear and exercise towards ourselves. St. Peter^a once and again doth exhort us “to love one another” *ἐκτενῶς*, with an outstretched affection: and how far that affection should be stretched we are here informed; even that it should reach the farthest that can be, or to a parity with that intense love which we do bear in heart and express in performance towards ourselves: so that we do either bring down our self-love to such a moderation, or raise up our charity to such a fervency, that both come to be adjusted in the same even level. This is that pitch at which we should aim and aspire; this is that perfection of charity which our Lord commendeth to us in that injunction, “Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”^b

That this sense of the words is included, yea, chiefly intended, divers reasons will evince. For,

1. The most natural signification and common use of the phrase doth import thus much; and any one at first hearing would so understand the words.

^a 1 Pet. i. 22. ; iv. 8.

^b Matt. v. 48.

2. It appeareth by comparing this precept with that to which it is annexed, “of loving God with all our heart and with all our soul;” which manifestly designeth the quantity and degree of that love: consequently the like determination is intended in this precept, which is expressed to resemble that, or designed in like manner to qualify and bound our duty towards our neighbour.

3. If the law doth not signify thus much, it doth hardly signify any thing; not, at least, any thing of direction or use to us: for no man is ignorant that he is obliged to love his neighbour; but how far that love must extend is the point wherein most of us do need to be resolved, and without satisfaction in which we shall hardly do any thing: for as he that oweth money will not pay except he can tell how much it is; so to know the duty will not avail towards effectual observance of it, if its measure be not fixed.

4. Indeed, the law otherwise understood will rather be apt to misguide than to direct us; inducing us to apprehend that we shall satisfy its intent, and sufficiently discharge our duty, by practising charity in any low degree or mean instance. Also,

5. The former sense, which is unquestionable, doth infer and establish this; because similitude of love, morally speaking, cannot consist with inequality thereof: for if in considerable degrees we love ourselves more than others, assuredly we shall fail both in exerting such internal acts of affection, and in performing such external offices of kindness toward them, as we do exert and perform in regard to ourselves; whence this law, taken merely as a rule, demanding a confused and

imperfect similitude of practice, will have no clear obligation or certain efficiency.

6. But farther to assure this exposition, I shall declare that the duty thus interpreted is agreeable to reason, and may justly be required of us upon considerations, which together will serve to press the observance of it according to such measure.

1. It is reasonable that we should thus love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really in all considerable respects the same with us: we concur with him in all that is necessary, substantial, and stable; we differ from him only in things contingent, circumstantial, and variable; in the which, of course or by chance, we are liable in a small time as much to differ from ourselves: in such respects we are not the same to-day that we were yesterday, and shall be to-morrow; for we shift our circumstances as we do our clothes; our bodies are in continual flux, and our souls do much conform to their alteration; our temper and complexion do vary with our air, our diet, our conversation, our fortunes, our age; our parts grow and decay; our principles and judgments, our affections and desires are never fixed, and seldom rest long in the same place; all our outward state doth easily change face: so that if we consider the same person in youth and in age, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in distress, may we not say, *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* How quite another man is he grown! Yet shall a man for such alterations surcease or abate his love to himself? Why, then, in regard to the like differences, shall we less affect our neighbour, who is endued with that

common nature, which alone through all those varieties sticketh fast in us; who is the most exact image of us, (or rather a copy, drawn by the same hand, of the same original,) another self, attired in diverse garb of circumstances? Do we not, so far as we despise or disaffect him, by consequence slight hate ourselves; seeing (except bare personality, we know not what metaphysical identity) there is not in him different from what is, or what may be, in us?

2. It is just that we should love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because he really no less serveth love, or because, upon a fair judgment, he appear equally amiable. Justice is impartial, and regardeth things as they are in themselves, abstracted from their relation to this or that person; when our neighbour seem worthy of affection no less as we, it demandeth that accordingly we should love no less.

And what ground can there be of loving ourselves which may not as well be found in others? Is it endowments of nature, is it accomplishments of knowledge, is it ornaments of virtue, is it accoutrements of fortune? But is not our neighbour possessed of the same? is he not, at least, capable of the same, and acquist of them depending upon the bounty of God*, or upon faculties dispensed to all? May not any man be as wise and as good as we? Why should we esteem, why not affect?

us alter the case? Is self, as self, lovely or valuable? Doth that respect lend any worth or price to things?

Likewise, what more can justice find in our neighbour to obstruct or depress our love than it may observe in ourselves? Hath he greater infirmities or defects, is he more liable to errors and miscarriages, is he guilty of worse faults than we? If, without arrogance and vanity, we cannot affirm this, then are we as unworthy of love as he can be; and refusing any degree thereof to him, we may as reasonably withdraw the same from ourselves.

3. It is fit that we should be obliged to love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

It is an imperfect charity which doth not respect our neighbour according to his utmost merit and worth, which doth not heartily desire his good, which doth not earnestly promote his advantage in every kind, according to our ability and opportunity: and what beyond this can we do for ourselves?

If in kind or degree we transcend this, it is not virtuous love or true friendship to ourselves, but a vain fondness or perverse dotage; proceeding from inordinate dispositions of soul, grounded on foolish conceits, begetting foul qualities and practices; envy, strife, ambition, avarice, and the like.

4. Equity requireth that we should love our neighbour to this degree, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others. No mean respect or slight affection will satisfy us; we cannot brook the

least disregard or coldness; to love us a little is all one to us as not to love us at all: it is therefore equitable that we should be engaged to the same height of charity towards others; otherwise we should be allowed in our dealings to use double weights and measures, which is plain iniquity. What, indeed, can be more ridiculously absurd than that we should pretend to receive that from others which we are not disposed to yield to them upon the same ground and title?^a

5. It is needful that so great a charity should be prescribed, because none inferior thereto will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law; namely, the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual society and intercourse: for if in considerable degree we do affect ourselves beyond others, we shall be continually bickering and clashing with them about points of interest and credit; scrambling with them for what may be had, and clambering to get over them in power and dignity: whence all the passions annoying our souls, and all the mischiefs disturbing our lives, must needs ensue.

6. That entire love which we owe to God our Creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, doth exact from us no less a measure of charity than this: for, seeing they have so clearly demonstrated themselves to bear an immense love to men, and have charged us therein to imitate them; it becometh us, in conformity, in duty, in gratitude to them, to bear the highest we can, that is, the same as we bear to ourselves: for how can we

^a Prov. xx. 10.

love God enough, or with all our soul, if we do not accord with him in loving his friends and relations, his servants, his children, with most entire affection?

If in God's judgment they are equal to us; if in his affection and care they have an equal share; if he in all his dealings is indifferent and impartial towards all; how can our judgment, our affection, our behaviour be right, if they do not conspire with him in the same measures?

7. Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our religion do imply obligation to this pitch of charity, upon various accounts.

It representeth all worldly goods and matters of private interest as very inconsiderable and unworthy of our affection, thereby subtracting the fuel of immoderate self-love.

It enjoineth us for all our particular concerns entirely to rely upon Providence; so barring solicitude for ourselves, and disposing an equal care for others.

It declareth every man so weak, so vile, so wretched, so guilty of sin and subject to misery, so for all good wholly indebted to the pure grace and mercy of God, that no man can have reason to dote on himself, or to prefer himself before others: we need not cark, or prog, or scrape for ourselves, being assured that God sufficiently careth for us.

In its account the fruits and recompences of love to others in advantage to ourselves do far surpass all present interests and enjoyments: whence, in effect, the more or less we love others, answerably the more or less we love ourselves; so that charity and self-love

become coincident, and both run together evenly in one channel.

It recommendeth to us the imitation of God's love and bounty ^a; which are absolutely pure, without any regard, any capacity of benefit redounding to himself.

It commandeth us heartily to love even our bitterest enemies and most cruel persecutors; which cannot be performed without a proportionable abatement of self-love.

It chargeth us not only freely to impart our substance, but willingly to expose our lives, for the good of our brethren ^b: in which case charity doth plainly match self-love; for what hath a man more dear or precious than his life to lay out for himself?

It representeth all men (considering their divine extraction, and being formed after God's image, their designation for eternal glory and happiness, their partaking of the common redemption by the undertakings and sufferings of Christ, their being objects of God's tender affection and care) so very considerable, that no regard beneath the highest will befit them.

It also declareth us so nearly allied to them, and so greatly concerned in their good, (we being "all one in Christ," and "members one of another ^c,") that we ought to have a perfect complacency in their welfare, and a sympathy in their adversity, as our own.

It condemneth self-love, self-pleasing, self-seeking, as great faults ^d; which yet (even in the highest excess)

^a Matt. v. 45.

^b 1 John, iii. 16.

^c Gal. iii. 28. John, xvii. 21. Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 26. John, xiii. 35.

^d 2 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 10. Rom. xv. 1. Phil. ii. 4. 1 Cor. x. 24.; xiii. 5.

do not seem absolutely bad, or otherwise culpable, than as including partiality, or detracting from that equal measure of charity which we owe to others: for surely we cannot love ourselves too much, if we love others equally with ourselves; we cannot seek our own good excessively, if with the same earnestness we seek the good of others.

It exhibiteth supernatural aids of grace, and conferreth that holy spirit of love, which can serve to no meaner purposes, than to quell that sorry principle of niggardly selfishness, to which corrupt nature doth incline; and to enlarge our hearts to this divine extent of goodness.

8. Lastly, many conspicuous examples, proposed for our direction in this kind of practice, do imply this degree of charity to be required of us.

It may be objected to our discourse, that the duty thus understood is unpracticable, nature violently swaying to those degrees of self-love which charity can nowise reach. This exception (would time permit) I should assoil, by showing how far, and by what means, we may attain to such a practice; (how at least, by aiming at this top of perfection, we may ascend nearer and nearer thereto;) in the mean time experience doth sufficiently evince possibility; and assuredly that may be done, which we see done before us. And so it is, pure charity hath been the root of such affections and such performances (recorded by indubitable testimony) toward others, which hardly any man can exceed in regard to himself: nor, indeed, hath there scarce ever appeared any heroical virtue, or memorable piety,

whereof charity, overbearing selfishness and sacrificing private interest to public benefit, hath not been a main ingredient. For instance, then, —

Did not Abraham even prefer the good of others before his own, when he gladly did quit his country, patrimony, friends, and kindred, to pass his days in a wandering pilgrimage, upon no other encouragement than an overture of blessing on his posterity?

Did not the charity of Moses stretch thus far, when for the sake of his brethren he voluntarily did exchange the splendours and delights of a court for a condition of vagrancy and servility^a; “choosing rather,” as the Apostle speaketh, “to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin?”^b Did not it overstretch, when (although having been grievously affronted by them) he wished that rather his name should be “expunged from God’s book^c,” than that their sin should abide unpardoned?

Did not Samuel exercise such a charity, when, being ingratefully and injuriously dismounted from his authority, he did yet retain toward that people a zealous desire of their welfare, “not ceasing earnestly to pray for them?”^d

Did not Jonathan love David equally with himself, when, for his sake, he chose to incur the displeasure of his father and his king^e; when, for his advantage, he was content to forfeit the privilege of his birth, and the inheritance of a crown; when he could without envy or

^a Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv.; in Eph. Or. vii.

^b Heb. xi. 25.

^c Exod. xxxii. 32. Βούλομαι μετ’ ἐκείνων ἀπολέσθαι, ἢ χωρὶς ἐκείνων σώζεσθαι· ὅντως ἔρωσ μέγας. Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii.

^d 1 Sam. xii. 23.

^e 1 Sam. xx. 30.

grudge look on the growing prosperity of his supplanter, could heartily wish his safety, could effectually protect it, could purchase it to him with his own great danger and trouble; when he, that in gallantry of courage and virtue did yield to none, was yet willing to become inferior to one born his subject, one raised from the dust, one “taken from a sheepcote^a”; so that unrepiningly and without disdain he could say, “Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee?”^b Are not these pregnant evidences, that it was truly said in the story, “The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul?”^c

Did not the Psalmist competently practise this duty, when in the sickness of his ingrateful adversaries “he clothed himself with sackcloth, he humbled his soul with fasting; he bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother?”^d

Were not Elias, Jeremy, and other prophets as much concerned for the good of their countrymen as for their own, when they took such pains, when they ran such hazards, when they endured such hardships, not only for them, but from them; being requited with hatred and misusage for endeavouring to reclaim them from sin, and stop them from ruin?

May not the holy Apostles seem to have loved mankind beyond themselves, when for its instruction and reformation, for reconciling it to God, and procuring its salvation, they gladly did undertake and undergo

^a Psalm lxxviii. 70.

^c 1 Sam. xviii. 1.; xx. 17.

^b 1 Sam. xxiii. 17.

^d Psalm xxxv. 13, 14.

so many rough difficulties, so many formidable dangers, such irksome pains and troubles, such extreme wants and losses, such grievous ignominies and disgraces; slighting all concerns of their own, and relinquishing whatever was most dear to them (their safety, their liberty, their ease, their estate, their reputation, their pleasure, their very blood and breath) for the welfare of others; even of those who did spitefully malign and cruelly abuse them?

Survey but the life of one among them; mark the wearisome travels he underwent over all the earth, the solicitous cares which did possess his mind “for all the churches;” the continual toils and drudgeries sustained by him, in preaching, by word and writing, in visiting, in admonishing, in all pastoral employments; the imprisonments, the stripes, the reproaches, the oppositions and persecutions of every kind, and from all sorts of people, which he suffered; the pinching wants, the desperate hazards, the lamentable distresses with the which he did ever conflict^a: peruse those black catalogues of his afflictions registered by himself; then tell me how much his charity was inferior to his self-love? Did not at least the one vie with the other, when he, for the benefit of his disciples, was content “to be absent from the Lord^b,” or suspended from a certain fruition of glorious beatitude; resting in this uncomfortable state, in “this fleshly tabernacle, wherein he groaned, being burdened^c,” and longing for enlargement? Did he not somewhat beyond himself love

^a 2 Cor. xi. 23. ; iv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 11.

^b Phil. i. 24.

^c 2 Cor. v. 1, &c.

those men, for whose salvation he wished himself “accursed from Christ^a,” or debarred from the assured enjoyment of eternal felicity; those very men by whom he had been stoned, had been scourged, had been often beaten to extremity, from whom he had received manifold indignities and outrages?^b

Did not they love their neighbours as themselves, who sold their possessions, and distributed the prices of them for relief of their indigent brethren?^c Did not most of the ancient saints and fathers mount near the top of this duty, of whom it is by unquestionable records testified, that they did freely bestow all their private estate and substance on the poor, devoting themselves to the service of God and edification of his people? Finally,

Did not our Lord himself in our nature exemplify this duty, yea, by his practice far outdo his precept? For he who, from the brightest glories, from the immense riches, from the ineffable joys and felicities of his celestial kingdom, did willingly stoop down to assume the garb of a servant, to be clothed with the infirmities of flesh, to become “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” he who for our sake vouchsafed to live in extreme penury and disgrace, to feel hard want, sore travail, bitter persecution, most grievous shame and anguish; he who not only did contentedly bear, but purposely did choose to be accused, to be slandered, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be tortured, to pour forth his heart blood upon a cross, for the sake

^a Rom. ix. 3.

^b 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. 1 Thess. ii. 15.

^c Acts, iv. 34.

of an unprofitable, an unworthy, an impious, an ingrateful generation; for the salvation of his open enemies ^a, of base apostates, of perverse rebels, of villanous traitors; he who, in the height of his mortal agonies, did sue for the pardon of his cruel murderers; who did send his Apostles to them, did cause so many wonders to be done before them, did furnish all means requisite to convert and save them; — he that acted and suffered all this, and more than can be expressed, with perfect frankness and good-will ^b; did he not signally love his neighbour as himself, to the utmost measure? Did not in him virtue conquer nature, and charity triumph over self-love? This he did to seal and impress his doctrine; to show us what we should do, and what we can do by his grace; to oblige us and to encourage us unto a conformity with him in this respect; for, “Walk in love,” saith the Apostle, “as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us ^c,” and, “This,” saith he himself, “is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” ^d And how can I better conclude, than in the recommendation of such an example?

“Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.” ^e

^a Rom. v. 6. 8. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Eph. ii. 1. Col. ii. 13. Chrys. in Eph. Or. vii.; in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii.

^b Heb. xii. 2.

^c Eph. v. 1, 2. 1 John, iii. 16.

^d John, xv. 12.; xiii. 34.

^e 2 Thess. ii. 16.

SECOND SERMON.

MATT. xxii. 39.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

I HAVE formerly discoursed on these words, and then showed how they do import two observable particulars: First, a rule of our charity, or that it should be like in nature; then a measure of it, or that it should be equal in degree to the love which we do bear to ourselves. Of this latter interpretation I did assign divers reasons, urging the observance of the precept according to that notion: but one material point, scantiness of time would not allow me to consider; which is, the removal of an exception, to which that interpretation is very liable, and which is apt to discourage from a serious application to the practice of this duty so expounded.

If, it may be said, the precept be thus understood, as to oblige us to love our neighbours equally with ourselves, it will prove unpracticable, such a charity being merely romantic and imaginary; for who doth, who can love his neighbour in this degree? Nature powerfully doth resist, common sense plainly doth forbid, that we should do so; a natural instinct doth prompt us to love ourselves, and we are forcibly driven thereto by an unavoidable sense of pleasure and pain, resulting from *the constitution* of our body and soul, so that our own *good or evil* are very sensible to us: whereas we

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have no such potent inclination to love others ; we have no sense, or a very faint one, of what another doth enjoy or endure. Doth not therefore nature plainly suggest that our neighbour's good cannot be so considerable to us as our own ? Especially, when charity doth clash with self-love, or when there is a competition between our neighbour's interest and our own, is it possible that we should not be partial to our own side ? Is not therefore this precept such as if we should be commanded to flourish or to do that which natural propension will certainly hinder ?

In answer to this exception, I say, first,

1. Be it so, that we can never attain to love our neighbour altogether so much as ourselves, yet may be reasonable that we should be enjoined to do so ; for

Laws must not be depressed to our imperfection, nor rules bent to our obliquity ; but we must ascend towards the perfection of them, and strive to conform our practice to their exactness. If what is prescribed be according to the reason of things just and fit, it is enough, although our practice will not reach it ; for what maineth may be supplied by repentance and humiliation in him that should obey, by mercy and pardon in he that doth command.

In the prescription of duty it is just, that what may be required, even in rigour, should be precisely determined, though, in execution of justice or dispensation of recompence, consideration may be had of our weakness whereby both the authority of our governor may be maintained, and his clemency glorified.

It is of great use, that by comparing the law

our practice, and in the perfection of the one discerning the defect of the other, we may be humbled, may be sensible of our impotency, may thence be forced to seek the helps of grace, and the benefit of mercy.

Were the rule never so low, our practice would come beneath it; it is therefore expedient that it should be high, that at least we may rise higher in performance than otherwise we should do; for the higher we aim, the nearer we shall go to the due pitch, as he that aimeth at heaven, although he cannot reach it, will yet shoot higher than he that aimeth only at the house-top.

The height of duty doth prevent sloth and decay in virtue, keeping us in wholesome exercise and in continual improvement, while we be always climbing toward the top, and straining unto further attainment^a; the sincere prosecution of which course, as it will be more profitable unto us, so it will be no less acceptable to God than if we could thoroughly fulfil the law; for in judgment God will only reckon upon the sincerity and earnestness of our endeavour, so that if we have done our best, it will be taken as if we had done all. "Our labour will not be lost in the Lord^b;" for the degrees of performance will be considered, and he that hath done his duty in part shall be proportionably recompensed, according to that of St. Paul, "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own work."^c Hence, sometimes we are enjoined to "be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect^d," and to be

^a Phil. iii. 12.

^b 1 Cor. xv. 58. 1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. vi. 10.

^c 1 Cor. iii. 8.

^d Matt. v. 48. ; xix. 21.

“holy as God is holy^a ;” otherwhile to “go on to perfection^b,” and to “press toward the mark^c :” which precepts in effect do import the same thing ; but the latter implieth the former, although in attainment impossible, yet in attempt very profitable : and surely he is likely to write best, who proposeth to himself the fairest copy for his imitation.

In fine, if we do act what is possible, or, as we can do, conform to the rule of duty, we may be sure that no impossibility of this, or of any other sublime law, can prejudice us.

I say, of any other law ; for it is not only this law to which this exception may be made, but many others, perhaps every one evangelical law, are alike repugnant to corrupt nature, and seem to surmount our ability.

But neither is the performance of this task so impossible, or so desperately hard, (if we take the right course, and use proper means toward it,) as is supposed : as may somewhat appear, if we will weigh the following considerations : —

1. Be it considered, that we may be mistaken in our account, when we do look on the impossibility or difficulty of such a practice, as it appeareth at present, before we have seriously attempted, and in a good method, by due means, earnestly laboured to achieve it ; for many things cannot be done at first, or with a small practice, which by degrees and a continued endeavour may be effected. Divers things are placed at a distance, so that without passing through the interjacent way we

^a 1 Pet. i. 16.

^b Col. iv. 12. Heb. vi. i.

^c Phil. iii. 14.

cannot arrive at them; divers things seem hard before trial, which afterward prove very easy. It is impossible to fly up to the top of a steeple; but we may ascend thither by steps. We cannot get to Rome without crossing the seas, and travelling through France or Germany; it is hard to comprehend a subtile theorem in geometry, if we pitch on it first; but if we begin at the simple principles, and go forward through the intermediate propositions, we may easily attain a demonstration of it. It is hard to swim, to dance, to play on an instrument; but a little trial, or a competent exercise, will render those things easy to us. So may the practice of this duty seem impossible, or insuperably difficult, before we have employed divers means, and voided divers impediments, before we have inured our minds and affections to it, before we have tried our forces in some instances thereof, previous to others of a higher strain, and nearer the perfection of it.

If we would set ourselves to exercise charity in those instances whereof we are at first capable without much reluctancy, and thence proceed toward others of a higher nature, we may find such improvement, and taste such content therein, that we may soon arise to incredible degrees thereof, and at length, perhaps, we may attain to such a pitch, that it will seem to us base and vain to consider our own good before that of others, in any sensible measure; and that nature which now so mightily doth contest in favour of ourselves, may in time give way to a better nature, born of custom, affecting the good of others. Let not, therefore, a present sense or experience raise in our minds a

prejudice against the possibility or practicableness of this duty.

2. Let us consider that, in some respects, and in divers instances, it is very feasible to love our neighbour no less than ourselves.

We may love our neighbour truly and sincerely, "out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned^a," as St. Paul doth prescribe; or, according to St. Peter's injunction, "from a pure heart love one another fervently^b;" and in this respect we can do no more toward ourselves; for truth admitteth no degrees; sincerity is a pure and complete thing, exclusive of all mixture or alloy.

And as to external acts, at least it is plain that charity toward others may reach self-love, for we may be as serious, as vigorous, as industrious in acting for our neighbour's good, as we can be in pursuing our own designs and interests, for reason easily can manage and govern external practice; and common experience sheweth the matter to this extent practicable, seeing that often men do employ as much diligence on the concerns of others, as they can do on their own (being able to do no more than their best in either case): wherefore, in this respect, charity may vie with selfishness; and practising thus far, may be a step to mount higher.

Also rational consideration will enable us to perform some interior acts of charity in the highest degree; for if we do but (as without much difficulty we may do) apply our mind to weigh the qualities and the actions

^a 1 Tim. i. 6.

^b 1 Pet. i. 22. Rom. xii. 9.

of our neighbour, we may thence obtain a true opinion and just esteem of him; and, secluding gross folly or flattery of ourselves, how can we in that respect or instance be more kind or benign to ourselves?

Is it not also within the compass of our ability to repress those passions of soul, the eruption whereof tendeth to the wrong, damage, and offence of our neighbour? in regard to which practice St. Paul affirmeth, that the Law may be fulfilled: "Love," saith he, "worketh no evil to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law^a." And what more, in this respect, can we perform for ourselves?

3. We may consider, that commonly we see men inclined by other principles to act as much or more for the sake of others, as they would for themselves.

Moral honesty hath inclined some, ambition and popularity have excited others, to encounter the greatest dangers, to attack the greatest difficulties, to expose their safety, to sacrifice their lives, for the welfare of their country.^b

Common friendship hath often done as much, and brutish love (that *mad friendship*^c, as Seneca calleth it) commonly doeth far more: for what will not a fond lover undertake and achieve for his minion, although she really be the worst enemy he can have? yet for such a snake will he not lavish his estate, prostitute his honour, abandon his ease, hazard his safety, shipwreck his conscience, forfeit his salvation?^d What may not a

^a Rom. xiii. 10.

^b Ἀληθές δὲ τὸ περὶ τοῦ σπουδαίου, καὶ τὸ τῶν φίλων ἕνεκα πολλὰ πράττειν καὶ τῆς πατρίδος, καὶ δεῖν ὑπεραποθνήσκειν. Arist. Eth. ix. 6.

^c Insana amicitia. Sen. Ep. ix.

^d Chrys. in Eph. p. 797.

Delilah obtain of her Samson, a Cleopatra of her Anthony, how prejudicial soever it be to his own interest and welfare?

Why, then, may not a principle of charity, grounded on so much better reason, and backed by so much stronger motives, be conceived able to engage men to the like practice? Why may not a man be disposed to do that out of a hearty good-will, which he can do out of vain conceit or vicious appetite? Why shall other forces overbear nature, and the power of charity be unable to match it?

4. Let us consider, that those dispositions of soul which usually with so much violence do thwart the observance of this precept, are not ingredients of true self-love, by the which we are directed to regulate our charity, but a spurious brood of our folly and pravity, which imply, not a sober love of ourselves, but a corrupt fondness toward an idol of our fancy mistaken for ourselves.

A high conceit of our worth or ability, of our fortune or worldly state, of our works and achievements; a great complacency or confidence in some endowment or advantage belonging to us, a stiff adherence to our own will or humour, a greedy appetite to some particular interest or base pleasure; these are those, not attendants of natural self-love, but issues of unnatural depravedness in judgment and affections, which render our practice so exorbitant in this regard, making us seem to love ourselves so immoderately, so infinitely; so contracting our souls, and drawing them inwards, that we appear indisposed to love our neighbour in any considerable

degree. If these (as by serious consideration they may be) were avoided, or much abated, it would not be found so grievous a matter to love our neighbour as ourselves; for that sober love remaining behind, to which nature inclineth, and which reason approveth, would rather help to promote than yield any obstacle to our charity. If such perverse selfishness were checked and depressed, and natural kindness cherished and advanced, then true self-love and charity would compose themselves into near a just poise.

5. Indeed (which we may farther consider) our nature is not so absolutely averse or indisposed to the practice of such charity, as to those may seem who view it slightly, either in some particular instances, or in ordinary practice. Nature hath furnished us with strong instincts for the defence and sustenance of our life; and common practice is depraved by ill education and custom. These some men poring on do imagine no room left for charity in the constitution of men; but they consider not that one of these may be so moderated, and the other so corrected, that charity may have a fair scope in men's hearts and practice; and they slip over divers pregnant marks of our natural inclination thereto.

Man having received his soul from the breath of God, and being framed after the image of his most benignant parent, there do yet abide in him some features resembling God, and relics of the divine original; there are in us seeds of ingenuity, of equity, of pity, of benignity, which, being cultivated by sober consideration and good

use, under the conduct and aid of heavenly grace, will produce noble fruits of charity.

The frame of our nature so far disposeth us thereto, that our bowels are touched with sensible pain upon the view of any calamitous object; our fancy is disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling any person; we can hardly see or read a tragedy without motions of compassion.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency at first sight, without any discursive reflection, doth obtain approbation and applause from us, being no less grateful and amiable to the mind than beauty to our eyes, harmony to our ears, fragrancy to our smell, and sweetness to our palate; and to the same mental sense, malignity, cruelty, harshness, all kinds of uncharitable dealing, are very disgustful and loathsome.

There wanteth not any commendation to procure respect for charity^a, nor any invective to breed abhorrence of uncharitableness; nature sufficiently prompting to favour the one and to detest the other.

The practice of the former, in common language, hath ever been styled humanity; and the disposition from whence it floweth is called good-nature: the practice of the latter is likewise termed inhumanity, and its sour ill-nature; as thwarting the common notions and inclinations of mankind, divesting us of our manhood and rendering us a sort of monsters among men.

No quality hath a clearer repute, or is commoner and more admired, than generosity, which is a kind of natural charity, or hath a great spice thereof: no

^a "Ὅτι τοὺς φιλανθρώπους ἐπαινοῦμεν. Arist. Eth. viii. 1.

position is more despised among men than niggardly selfishness; whence, commonly, men are ashamed to avow self-interest as a principle of their actions (rather fathering them on some other cause), as being conscious to themselves that it is the basest of all principles.*

Whatever the censurers and detractors of human nature do pretend, yet even themselves do admire pure beneficence, and condemn selfishness; for, if we look to the bottom of their intent, it is hence they are bent to slander mankind as void of good nature, because out of malignity they would not allow it a quality so excellent and divine.

Wherefore, according to the general judgment and conscience of men (to omit other considerations), our nature is not so averse from charity, or destitute of propensions thereto; and therefore, cherishing the natural seeds of it, we may improve it to higher degrees.

6. But, supposing the inclinations of nature, as it now standeth in its depraved and crazy state, do so mightily obstruct the practice of this duty in the degree specified, so that, however, we cannot by any force of reason or philosophy attain to desire so much, or relish so well, the good of others as our own; yet we must remember, that a subsidiary power is by the divine mercy dispensed, able to control and subdue nature to a compliance, to raise our practice above our natural forces. We have a like averseness to other spiritual duties, (to the loving God with all our hearts, to the

* Ἐπιτιμῶσι γὰρ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦς μάλιστα ἀγαπῶσι, καὶ ὥς ἐν αἰσχροῦ φιλεῖ-
τους ἀποκαλοῦσι. Arist. ix. 8.

Ὅσῳ ἂν βελτίων ᾖ, μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ καλὸν, καὶ φίλου ἕνεκα, τὸ δὲ αὐτοῦ
παρίησι. Ibid.

mortifying our flesh and carnal desires, to the contempt of worldly things, and placing our happiness in spiritual goods,) yet we are able to perform them by the succour of grace, and in virtue of that omnipotency which St. Paul assumed to himself when he said, “I can do all things by Christ enabling me.”^a

If we can get “the spirit of love^b,” (and assuredly we may get it, if we carefully will seek it, with constant fervency imploring it from him who hath promised to bestow it on those that ask it,) it will infuse into our minds that light, whereby we shall discern the excellency of this duty, together with the folly and baseness of that selfishness which crosseth it; it will kindle in our hearts charitable affections, disposing us to wish all good to our neighbour, and to feel pleasure therein; it will render us “partakers of that divine nature,” which so will guide and urge us in due measure to affect the benefit of others, as now corrupt nature doth move us unmeasurably to covet our own; being supported and elevated by its virtue, we may, surmounting the clogs of fleshly sense and conceit, soar up to the due pitch of charity; being *θεοδιδακτοι*, “taught of God to love one another^c,” and endowed with “the fruits of the Spirit,”^d which are “love, gentleness, goodness, meekness^e,” and “created according to God in Christ Jesus^f” to the practice of answerable “good works.”^g

7. There are divers means conducive to the abate-

^a Phil. iv. 13., *ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι*.

^b 2 Tim. i. 7.

^c 1 Thess. iv. 9.

^d Gal. v. 22.

^e Eph. v. 9.

^f Col. iii. 12.

^g Eph. iv. 24.; ii. 10.

ment of difficulty in this practice, which I shall propose, referring the matter to issue upon due trial of them.

1. Let us carefully weigh the value of those things which immoderate self-love doth affect in prejudice to charity, together with the worth of those which charity doth set in balance to them.

Aristotle himself doth observe, that the ground of culpable self-love, scraping, scrambling, scuffling for particular interest, is men's high esteem and passion for, and greedy appetite of wealth, of honours, of corporeal pleasures: whereas virtuous persons, not admiring those things, will constantly act for honesty sake, and out of love to their friends or country; wherein although they most really benefit and truly gratify themselves, yet are they not blamed for selfishness.*

And so indeed it is: if we rightly did apprehend the infinite vanity of all worldly goods, the meanness of private concerns, the true despicableness of all those honours, those profits, those delights on which commonly men do so dote, we should not be so fond or jealous of them, as to scrape or scuffle for them, envying or grudging them to others: if we did conceive the transcendent worth of future rewards allotted to this and other virtues, the great considerableness of public good at which charity aimeth, the many advantages which may accrue to us from our neighbour's welfare,

* Οἱ μὲν οὖν εἰς ὄνειδος ἄγοντες αὐτὰ, φιλαύτους καλοῦσι τοὺς ἑαυτοῖς ἀπονέμοντας τὸ πλεῖστον ἐν χρήμασι, καὶ τιμαῖς, καὶ ἡδοναῖς ταῖς σωματικαῖς· τούτων γὰρ οἱ πολλοὶ ὀρέγονται, καὶ ἐσπουδάκασιν περὶ αὐτὰ, ὡς ἄριστα ὄντα· διὸ καὶ περιμάχητὰ ἐστίν· οἱ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα πλεονέκται χαρίζονται ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, καὶ ὅλως τοῖς πάθεσι, καὶ τῇ ἀλόγῳ τῆς ψυχῆς· — δικαίως δὲ τοῖς οὕτω φιλαύτοις ἐνειδίζεται. Arist. Eth. ix. 8. Vid. tot.

(entertained with complacence, and wisely accommodated to our use,) we should not be so averse from tendering his good as our own.

2. Let us consider our real state in the world, in dependence upon the pleasure and providence of Almighty God.

If we look upon ourselves as subsisting only by our own care and endeavour, without any other patronage or help, it may thence prove hard to regard the interests of others as comparable to our own. Seeing, then, in order to our living with any convenience, it is necessary that we should be solicitous for our own preservation and sustenance; that will engage us to contend with others as competitors for the things we need, and incapable otherwise to attain: but if (as we ought to do, and the true state of things requireth) we consider ourselves as subsisting under the protection and by the providence of God, who no less careth for us than for others, and no less for others than for us; (for, as the Wise Man saith, he “careth for all alike^a;)” who commendeth to us a being mutually concerned each for other, and is engaged to keep us from suffering thereby; who commandeth us to disburden our cares upon himself; who assuredly will the better provide for us, as we do more further the good of others: if we do consider thus, it will deliver us from solicitude concerning our subsistence and personal accommodations; whence we may be free to regard the concerns of others with no less application than we do regard our own.

As living under the same government and laws

^a Ὁμοίως δὲ προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων. Sap. vi. 7.

(being members of one commonwealth, one corporation, one family) disposeth men not only willingly but earnestly to serve the public interest, beyond any hopes of receiving thence any particular advantage answerable to their pain and care ; so considering ourselves as members of the world, and of the Church, under the governance and patronage of God, may disengage us from immoderate respect of private good, and incline us to promote the common welfare.

3. There is one plain way of rendering this duty possible, or of perfectly reconciling charity to self-love; which is, a making the welfare of our neighbour to be our own : which if we can do, then easily may we desire it more seriously, then may we promote it with the greatest zeal and vigour; for then it will be an instance of self-love to exercise charity ; then both these inclinations conspiring will march evenly together, one will not extrude nor depress the other.

It may be hard, while our concerns appear divided, not to prefer our own ; but when they are coincident, or conspire together, the ground of that partiality is removed.

Nor is this an imaginary course, but grounded in reason, and thereby reducible to practice : for, considering the manifold bands of relation (natural, civil, or spiritual) between men, as naturally of the same kind and blood, as civilly members of the same society, as spiritually linked in one brotherhood ; considering the mutual advantages derivable from the wealth and welfare of each other, (in way of needful succour, advice, and comfort, of profitable commerce, of pleasant con-

versation;) considering the mischiefs which from our neighbour's indigency and affliction we may incur, they rendering him as a wild beast, unsociable, troublesome, and formidable to us; considering that we cannot be happy without good nature and good humour, and that good nature cannot behold any sad object without pity and dolorous resentment, good humour cannot subsist in prospect of such objects; considering that charity is an instrument whereby we may apply all our neighbour's good to ourselves, it being ours if we can find complacency therein; it may appear reasonable to reckon all our neighbour's concerns to our account.

That this is practicable, experience may confirm; for we may observe, that men commonly do thus appropriate the concerns of others, resenting the disasters of a friend or of a relation with as sensible displeasure as they could their own; and answerably finding as high a satisfaction in their good fortune. Yea, many persons do feel more pain by compassion for others, than they could do in sustaining the same evils. Divers can with a stout heart undergo their own afflictions, who are melted with those of a friend or brother. Seeing, then, in true judgment, humanity doth match any other relation, and Christianity far doth exceed all other alliances, why may we not on them ground the like affections and practices, if reason hath any force, or consideration can any wise sway in our practice?

4. It will greatly conduce to the perfect observance of this rule, to the depression of self-love, and advancement of charity to the highest pitch, if we do studiously contemplate ourselves, strictly examining our

conscience, and seriously reflecting on our unworthiness and vileness; the infirmities and defects of nature, the corruptions and defilements of our soul, the sins and miscarriages of our lives: which doing, we shall certainly be far from admiring or doting on ourselves; but rather, as Job did, we shall “condemn and abhor ourselves.”^a When we see ourselves so deformed and ugly, how can we be amiable in our own eyes? How can we more esteem or affect ourselves than others, of whose unworthiness we can hardly be so conscious or sure? What place can there be for that vanity and folly, for that pride and arrogance, for that partiality and injustice, which are the sources of immoderate self-love?

5. And lastly, we may from many conspicuous experiments and examples be assured that such a practice of this duty is not impossible. But these I have already produced and urged in the precedent discourse, and shall not repeat them again.

^a Job, ix. 20. ; xlii. 6.

ON LIVING TO GOD AND NOT TO OURSELVES.

[RICHARD BENTLEY, D.D.]

ROM. xiv. 7.

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

OUR Apostle having, in this chapter and before, discoursed of the mutual duties and obligations in human life, concludes the whole with the words above, sententiously in way of aphorism, "That no one liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself." Which, without doubt, must seem a harsh paradox to a narrow-minded person, that is wholly involved and contracted within his own little self, and makes his private pleasure or profit the sole centre of his designs, and the circumference of all his actions. Indeed, the heathen poet in the epigram, a man of that very stamp, as "sitting in Pagan darkness and the shadow of death," teaches the downright reverse to our text: *Vive tibi*, says he, *nam moriere tibi*. He took it as self-evident, "that every one dies to himself;" and therefore infers it as a consequence both plain and profitable, "that every one ought to live to himself." But our inspired writer has

here taught us a new and Christian lesson, a doctrine which is the source and spring of all true piety to God, of justice and beneficence to men, of public spirit, and all the other ingredients of heroic and god-like virtue; a doctrine, too, so pregnant of sense and truth, that it may be considered in various views, all different from each other, and all worthy of our serious speculation. I cannot now undertake to exhaust them all, in so short a discourse as is prescribed by the occasion; but I shall place before you some of the principal, at least some of the most general and obvious, which may furnish a proper hint, and rise to your own further meditations.

I. "None of us," says the Apostle, "liveth to himself." To live to a man's self, when considered at large, is to do all the actions of life with regard to himself alone; as a true free-born son of earth, not accountable to any other being for his behaviour and conduct, but carving out his own satisfaction in every object of desire, without any obligation or relation to a higher power. Now, in this sense, I conceive, it is sufficiently plain, that none of us liveth, ought to live, or can live, to himself. It is the thoughtless atheist alone that can be guilty of such absurdity, to imagine the first parents of human race sprung naturally out of the mud, without the foresight and efficiency of an intelligent cause. Every one, I say, but an atheist, (if an atheist can now possibly be, under the powerful light of the Gospel, and the late advances in natural knowledge, which directly lead and guide to the discovery of the Deity,) *every one else must needs see and acknowledge that an almighty and all-wise God was our creator, and, con-*

sequently, that we live to him, the sole author of life, and not to ourselves. All our powers and faculties, all the properties and perfections of our nature, were gratuitously given us by the good will of our Maker, without our own asking or knowing. We neither produced our own being, nor can we annihilate it; we can neither raise it above nor depress it below the original standard of its essence, derived to the whole species. “Which of you,” says our Saviour, Luke xii. 25., “which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?” And so, also, may we say, which of us creatures, by all our thought and industry, can add one specific power to our beings, more than God has bestowed upon them? It is true, indeed, we may either exert or clog our native faculties in different degrees; we may either invigorate them by exercise and habit, or damp and stifle them by sloth and neglect; so that the same person, under one education and tour of life, would extremely differ from himself had he fallen under another. But, with all our endeavours, we can exalt none of our faculties above their original pitch; we can never raise the aqueduct above the level of the fountain-head; we cannot advance our species, or change our human nature to a superior class of being; we must all continue in our settled rank and degree, as God was pleased to place mankind in the great scale of the creation. It is the will and decree of God, that we are what we are; and as we are all his creatures, the work of his hands, his servants of such particular station, we do all live to him, and not to ourselves.

II. But then, secondly, besides the title of creation,

even on the account of our conservation, we so entirely subsist upon the power and will of God, that in this view also we must needs confess, that “none of us liveth to himself,” but to him. For, as God at first, by his almighty power, produced the world and all creatures out of nothing; so, by a perpetual efficacy and emanation of the same power, he sustains them all from relapsing into nothing. It is concluded, I think, among all those that have well considered these matters, that the same divine energy which gave a being to any creature, must be constantly and incessantly exerted to continue it in being. Could we suppose the great Creator but for one single moment to suspend and interrupt the communication of that power, the whole frame and system of nature must immediately drop and vanish into its primitive nullity. Every essence, therefore, except his own eternal and immutable essence, is solely supported by him, and owes to him not only the first production, but the continuance of its being. From him alone depend not only the “breath of our nostrils,” the operations and instruments of mortal life, but the very existence of our souls and bodies: upon his invariable will, upon his inviolable promise, rest all our hopes of future glory, and all the prospect of happy immortality. This the voice of reason dictates to us; and the authority of Holy Scripture puts it out of question; “for in him,” says our Apostle (Acts, xvii. 28.), “we live, and move, and have our being.” And if we all live and exist in him, much more do we live “to him,” and none of us “to himself.”

III. But again, thirdly, the proposition, now our text,

may be considered in another view, not only with respect to God, our Creator and Preserver, but with reference to the several parts of the creation itself. If we survey the whole system of it, as far as human understanding and industry have yet advanced, we shall not find one single thing made absolutely for itself, but to bear likewise some office, some subservience to the uses of its fellow creatures: the all-wise Author of the universe having so contrived every part of his work, that they are all coherent and contributive to each other; and, by their mutual operations, conduce every one its share to the economy and beauty of the whole. Thus, astronomy informs us, that the moon, not barely made to “govern our night,” though so very useful to our earth by reflecting the sun’s rays to it, receives again the like benefit from our earth, in a greater measure than she gives it. It were very easy, if this occasion was proper for it, to show the like relation in all known instances of nature; how every thing conspires to the general good, and was made for each other, as well as each for itself, and all for the glory of their Maker. It is enough to say, once for all, what true philosophy assures us, that every least particle of body, every atom of the world, has its operation and passion perpetual and reciprocal with all the rest of the world besides it; such an alliance being established between all the matter of the universe, that the whole is linked together by mutual attraction or gravitation, working regularly and uniformly according to quantity and distance; which is the great instrument in the hand of God to support the

permanent frame of things in the same posture as at first it was constituted. Now if all the visible world be thus made for each other, how dare we entertain the thought that we alone should be made to live to ourselves? Some indeed have had the vanity to assert that all the world was made for the use of man, and man for his own enjoyment: a very insolent presumption; a composition of self-love, partiality, and natural pride; when we have neither a due knowledge of ourselves nor of the things about us. By the late improvements of science and art, there are discovered such new regions in the universe, new to us, though as old as our own; such immense tracts of sky, and innumerable stars, each equal to our sun and his spacious system, which never before entered into man's imagination; that it is scarce possible to think in earnest, that all those were created for our sakes only: seeing our world was grown old before we had the least tidings of their very existence. And this may teach us both the modesty and the judgment to think that, even in the intellectual world, there may be numerous ranks and classes of rational creatures, some inferior and many superior to us in the perfections of their several natures. What arrogance, therefore, for us,—for us that probably make so small a figure in the great sum of the creation,—to think we only were made exempt from the universal law of service and dependence! Has not God himself told us, in the Apostle's words (Heb. i. 14.), that even the angels themselves *“are all ministering spirits?”* But if those glorious beings live to subserve and minister to others, how can we, so far below in natural powers, station, and dignity;

how can we presume we owe service to nothing, but are made “to live only to ourselves?”

IV. But, fourthly, let us now proceed from the natural world to the moral; and in that view we shall still more clearly discover the truth of our text, “That none of us liveth to himself.” Our Creator has implanted in mankind such appetites and inclinations, such natural wants and exigencies, that they lead him spontaneously to the love of society and friendship, to the desire of government and community. Without society and government, man would be found in a worse condition than the very beasts of the field. That divine ray of reason, which is his privilege above the brutes, would only serve, in that case, to make him more sensible of his wants, and more uneasy and melancholic under them. Now, if society and mutual friendship be so essential and necessary to the happiness of mankind, it is a clear consequence, that all such obligations as are necessary to maintain society and friendship are incumbent on every man. No one, therefore, that lives in society, and expects his share in the benefits of it, can be said to live to himself. No: he lives to his prince and his country; he lives to his parents and his family; he lives to his friends, and to all under his trust; he lives even to foreigners, under the mutual sanctions and stipulations of alliance and commerce; nay, he lives to the whole race of mankind: whatsoever has the character of man, and wears the same image of God that he does, is truly his brother; and, on account of that natural consanguinity, has a just claim to his kindness and benevolence. Not that private offenders are not to be

punished with loss of goods, of liberty, of life itself, in proportion to the offence; nor just wars not to be undertaken for the security of national happiness. Wars and offences “will come” (such is the imperfection of human state), and “woe be to them by whom they come.” But then those very severities, the necessary effects of penal laws at home, and of wars and ruptures abroad, do all arise and flow from a principle of love and kindness. It is a superior love for the good of the whole community, which makes it necessary to cut off those noxious members of it, as mortified limbs are freely parted with to preserve the rest of the natural body. Certainly, the nearer one can arrive to this universal charity, this benevolence to all human race, the more he has of the divine character imprinted on his soul: for “God is love,” says the Apostle; he delights in the happiness of all his creatures. To this public principle we owe our thanks for the inventors of sciences and arts; for the founders of kingdoms, and first institutors of laws; for the heroes that hazard or abandon their own lives for the dearer love of their country; for the statesmen that generously sacrifice their private profit and ease to establish the public peace and prosperity for ages to come. And if nature’s still voice be listened to, this is really not only the noblest, but the pleasantest employment. For though gratitude, and a due acknowledgment and return of kindness received, is a desirable good, and implanted in our nature by God himself, as *a spur* to mutual beneficence; yet, in the whole, it is *certainly much* more pleasant to love than to be beloved *again*. For the sweetness and felicity of life consist

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in duly exerting and employing those sociable passions of the soul, those natural inclinations to charity and compassion. And he that has given his mind a contrary turn and bias, that has made it the seat of selfishness and of unconcernment for all about him, has deprived himself of the greatest comfort and relish of life. Whilst he foolishly designs "to live to himself alone" he loses that very thing which makes life itself desirable. So that, in a word, if we are created by our Maker to enjoy happiness and contentment in our being; if we are born for society and friendship, and mutual assistance; if we are designed to live as men, and not wild beasts of the desert; we must truly say, in the words of our text, "That none of us liveth to himself."

V. But, again, fifthly, besides this moral view of the world, if we consider the state of human life, as it is influenced by religion and the Gospel of Christ, shall yet have a clearer discovery of the truth of the text: for a man truly religious cannot be said "to live to himself," but to God, to whom he has dedicated his worship and service. The service of God is the first principle and ultimate end of all his thoughts and actions. Even in the smallest affairs of life, "what he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he does all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. In this he is elevated and engaged to a higher pitch of duty above the rules and obligations of mere morality; that in things seemingly indifferent, he has still his eye fixed on heaven, how every thing may conduce to God's honour, and peace and righteousness among men. And in

stricter acceptation, the words are used by our Apostle; *οὐδεὶς ἑμῶν*, “none of us,” of us Christians, “liveth to himself,” *καὶ οὐδεὶς*, “and none” (not “no man,” as in our English version, but “none” of us Christians) “dieth to himself.” Christianity excludes all selfishness, not only in the total and complex of living, but in the minutest particulars and circumstances of life. For it was a controversy of the smaller size that gave occasion to our text: it was neither about essential duties of moral, nor important articles of faith; but about matters of free choice and indifference, of scruples only and infirmities; about observation of days; and distinction of meats; things of lawful use or neglect to those that knew their own liberty; and yet, even in this case, our Apostle declares that both sides had the glory of God in their view, and not an indulgence to their own appetites or opinions. “For he,” says he, “that observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he that observes not the day, to the Lord he observes it not; and he that either eats or abstains, to the Lord he doth either, and giveth God thanks. For none of us,” then adds he, “liveth to himself, and none (of us) dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” And the truth is, such a general resignation of one’s self to God is the first contract, the express covenant of our religious profession. When we first take the badge of Christianity, our very souls and bodies are made an offering to Christ; we have nothing left us that we may call our own, as separate from his

interest and service: "we are dead unto the world and to sin, and live to God and to righteousness:" we live no longer to ourselves. "Christ," says the Apostle, "died for all, that they which live, should not thenceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again."

6. And then, sixthly, while a good Christian is persuaded that he ought to live unto Christ, in subordination to that duty, he lives to all his fellow-members in Christ, to all those for whom our common Saviour suffered. He considers both his natural abilities and the external blessings of Providence as a talent committed to his care to be employed for the public good, for promoting piety, and virtue, and prosperity among men, expecting, at the great day, to be called to his account by an all-knowing and impartial Judge; for he sees there is no station or condition of life, no office or relation or circumstance, but there arises from it such special obligation, that he may truly be said to live to others rather than to himself.

If any persons can be conceived to enjoy the prerogative of "living to themselves," some, perhaps, may imagine that the monarchs and princes of the world, with the chief ministers under them, have the fairest claim to that privilege, as possessing and commanding, in the largest measure, all the power, and splendour, and voluptuousness of life. But if things are weighed in the just balance of reason and truth, they, perhaps, of all others, have the least pretence to self-living: for though God himself has described them, that they are "*gods among men*," as bearing the character and image

of divine power and authority ; yet all that superiority is solely derived and delegated from him ; it is a mere trust put into their hands ; they are only commissioners under him, and accountable to him for the discharge of their great office : so that they can the less be said to “live to themselves,” inasmuch as the extent and sphere of their duty is wider than that of others. For, if the ancient remark be always found most true, “that the master of the house is the veriest servant of all his family,”^a because he has the care and concern for all ; so, if the boldness of the comparison may be allowed, the supreme magistrate himself, and those that are next below him, are the veriest subjects in all his dominions. An inferior magistrate or a private subject hath his service confined within narrower limits ; the prince’s and the prime officer’s duty extends over the whole : so that, by being the masters and protectors of all, they really become the servants of all. They watch, that others may sleep ; they provide by timely thought and long views for the future, that others may rest secure in the possession of the present ; they, upon great emergencies, run all the hazards of war abroad, that others may dwell in peace and tranquillity at home : and is this to “live to one’s self ?” Surely, he that employs and dedicates all his thoughtful hours, that exposes his very life, to the safety of the public, will not be thought to live to himself, but to the welfare of his nation.

But, then, there is a just return of service due from subjects to their governors : a faithful loyalty, a cheer-

^a Εἰς ἐστὶ δούλος οἰκίας, ὁ δεσπότης.

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interpret all actions of their governors, that warp
most innocent occurrences to censure and calumny
that charge every adverse turn of Providence to
failure in their conduct; always complaining and
blaming, so as even to wish for cross accidents in
public administration, to purchase the malicious phre-
sure of murmuring and accusing. Nor is this tribu-
of our hearts the only right of our governors: even
our possessions, too, the gifts of our ancestors, and
very acquists of our own hands, are not entirely
own, but in part due to the community, and our
cheerfully to be paid, when they are lawfully exacted.
so that subjects, also, cannot be said to live solely
themselves, but partly, and perhaps principally, to the
prince and their country.

But at least the wealthy retired person, that enjoys
an ample inheritance without the toil and incumbrance
of public employments, he, perhaps, may be tempted to
imagine, that he can and may "live to himself,"
his own sole ease and diversions. But I
consider, that even in the most private
various relations and duties thence arise
band, as a father, a master, a neighbour
the community, of Christianity at large
race of mankind; or, besides all this
words of the Apostle, "Charge
this world, that they do good, the

works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Here is the rich man's special duty, here is his peculiar province; he is constituted a minister and distributor of God's bounty for the relief of those that are helpless, in calamity and want; and if he prove an "unjust steward," if he squander his talents in luxury, or hoard them up with uncharitable avarice, he will at last be found among those cursed and miserable, "who saw our Saviour hungry, and gave him no meat; thirsty, and gave him no drink; naked, and clothed him not; sick or in prison, and relieved him not: for inasmuch as they did it not to one of their poor neighbours, they did it not to him." Surely, therefore, the rich persons cannot be said "to live to themselves," since they are only trustees under God for the poor of the world. And, then, as for the poor themselves, they, I presume, of all men, will never be suspected as living to their selves, whose hard fate and condition in life makes others' pride and arrogance imagine that they are born and designed for nothing so much as to live and labour for them.

And now, having competently shown, through the several relations and conditions of human life, that none of us "liveth to himself;" let us proceed to the second branch of our text, and advance our thoughts and views beyond this world to another. And, indeed, if the former proposition be established and allowed, "That no man lives to himself;" it is a short and ready inference from it, "That no man dies to himself:" for death, abstractly considered, is nothing but a mere privation; it is the clause only and the

period of life. So that, if the whole line of life be in the hands of another, and not in our own; death, which is only the extremity, the last point of that line, must of necessity be in the same hands. If we live therefore to God, and not to ourselves, we must needs die to him also.

But let none of my hearers so misinterpret our Apostle, as if, by saying "none of us dies to himself," he taught that none of us could be accessory or contributing to his own death. Without doubt he was not of their opinion that believe the time, cause, and circumstances of every man's death to be fixed as immovably by God's prescience, as by necessity or fate. God can foresee contingencies, the free resolves of rational agents, as well as the most necessary events in the material and inanimate world: but the Divine prescience does not superadd nor imply a fatal necessity. That notion robs us of our free will, of our reason, of our very soul; is repugnant both to observation and the revealed word of God. "Bloody and deceitful men," says the royal Psalmist, "shall not live out half their days;" so that impiety and guilt deprived them of half that space of life, that in a natural course of things they might have arrived to. And does not daily experience teach us, that intemperance, temerity, and violence cut men off in the flower of their age, and in the very meridian of life? And again, how many are daily reprieved and rescued from the very jaws of impending death, by the saving care and skill of the physician! But then withal, though the space of life *may be thus shortened*, and the thread of it

broken by such accidents, (though even those, too, come to pass not without the foreknowledge and permission of God,) yet perhaps it can never be lengthened by all the power and wisdom of man. A flower or fruit may be plucked off by force before the time of their maturity; but they cannot be made to outgrow the fixed period, when they are to fade and drop of themselves. The hand of nature then plucks them off, and all human art cannot withhold it. And as God has so appointed and determined the several growths and periods of the vegetable race, so he seems to have prescribed the same law to the various kinds of living creatures. In the first formation and rudiments of every organical body, there are contained the specific powers both of its stature and duration. And when the evolution of those animal powers is all exhausted and run out, the creature expires and dies of itself, as ripe fruit falls from the tree. So that, as we cannot add one cubit, one inch, to our stature, so neither can we add one day, one hour, to our years, beyond that fixed limit of natural life, to which our original frame and constitution was made to extend. So certain is it, that none of us either liveth or dieth to himself, but all of us to God; who has given to each of us his particular body, with the determined powers and period belonging to it.

2. But then, again, besides our dying to God, even in reference to men, we die to others, and not to ourselves. A good Christian should in every stage of life act all *to God's honour, and the good of mankind; but especially at his departure, in that last scene of mortality,*

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DR. BENTLEY.] AND NOT TO OURSELVES.

which is most observed by the spectators. "His light
in our Saviour's language, " should always so sh
before men, that they may glorify the Father, tha
in heaven:" but particularly in that last glimpse
life, when the lamp is going out, it ought to br
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presumed to speak his true sense of things; so that
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powerful influence on the minds of the living. An
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death, than in all the victories of his life before; s
apostle or a confessor of Christ has made more
verts to the Gospel at the scaffold or the faggot,
by all the labours of his former ministry. And it
this design and view, that made so many of the p
tive Christians even breathe and thirst after marty
To die solitary in a bed, amidst the tears of a
friends, was an afflicting consideration; it was
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It is true, indeed, and blessed be God's providence
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copied by every one. Where God has given peace
tranquillity to his Church, and brought the civil p
itself under the easy yoke of the Gospel, the
of martyrdom do not grow there. But, however

general, it is the duty of every one, within the sphere of his acquaintance, as far as his example can influence, as the nature and circumstances of his sickness may permit, to glorify his Maker and Redeemer at his death, at his passage from this short life to an endless immortality. So that none of us can be said to die only to ourselves, but to God, and to those that survive us.

3. But then, last of all, let us extend and enlarge our view even beyond the prospect of death and the grave; and we shall find that even in those everlasting dwellings prepared for the good and the bad, none shall live to himself, but one to another. Even the torments of the damned, “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” will receive a vast accession of misery and woe from the mutual “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.” Even there they will not live and suffer to themselves; but the pains of each will be multiplied and enhanced by the horrible consort and universal accents of sorrow and lamentation. But the idea of this is too frightful to be dwelt on; it curdles the very blood, and subdues the imagination. Let us rather transfer the fancy to a more agreeable image, the blessed station of saints and angels, those regions of light and joy, where they “die indeed no more,” neither to themselves nor others, but live immortally to God, and to all the glorified company. For even heaven itself, without communion and society, would lose half of its relish: even there, to live eternally “to one’s self,” has some notion in it and tincture of torment eternal. No selfishness inhabits there; they compose a celestial choir, perpetually celebrating the praises of

that exalts himself shall be brought low."* Could we rightly measure the nature of ambition, or exaltation of man's self, by the true rule of the sanctuary, and not by the popular notions or conceits that men, this way very faulty, have of this infernal sin, we might find a more compendious ascent unto the holy Mount, than most do take care to inquire after. The root whence this mischief springs, as all agree, is a desire of civil power or greatness; which then only (in vulgar esteem) brancheth itself into ambition, when this greatness is sought for by unlawful means. But this is a mist of error or hypocrisy in the mind, which riseth from foggy desires of this gross humour in the heart. For we may, as often we do, use lawful means for compassing most unlawful ends: so may the end which we earnestly intend be exceeding good, and yet the intention of it very naughty. Though Atheism be the usual fruit of ambition come to full growth, or thoroughly ripe, yet many in a lower degree ambitiously minded, often seek after good places in churches or commonweal, with earnest desire to do more good in them than others would; howbeit, the very accomplishment of these seeming good desires or intentions makes them worse men than they were before; and their country can never gain by such exchanges; as that emperor intimated to his son, *bonum militem perdidistis, imperatorem perdidistis*; "by losing a good pastor for a corrupt minister, a good private man for a naughty magistrate." The party that advanced might empty the country of many good men, wherewith it had

AMBITION AN HINDRANCE TO TRUE FAITH.

[THOMAS JACKSON, D.D.]

OF THE ANTIPATHY BETWEEN TRUE FAITH AND AMBITION, OR SELF-EXALTATION. — THAT THE ONE RESEMBLES OUR SAVIOUR'S, THE OTHER SATAN'S, DISPOSITION. — BRIEF ADMONITIONS FOR AVOIDING SUCH DANGERS AS GROW FROM OTHER BRANCHES OF VOLUPTUOUS LIFE.

SEEING desire of riches draws us into so many snares, and entangles us with so many noisome lusts, the reader haply will condemn the covetous as the man whom God abhorreth most. Howbeit, besides covetousness, or love of riches, another root of evil there is, whose antipathy with the seed of life is like the enmity betwixt the woman's and the serpent's seed. And no marvel, seeing true and lively faith is the express image of that humble, meek, and lowly mind which was in Christ, as this wild tare, whose extirpation we seek, is but the offspring of the great serpent's venomous pride. Riches choke or stifle the word of life in the growth, and make the passage into the kingdom of God so hard and narrow for the rich man, as is declared; but aspiring thoughts perish the very first seeds and roots of faith, and cast down the ambitious man headlong from approaching the gate whereat the righteous enter; for "every one

that exalts himself shall be brought low.”^a Could we rightly measure the nature of ambition, or exaltation of man’s self, by the true rule of the sanctuary, and not by the popular notions or conceits that men, this way very faulty, have of this infernal sin, we might find a more compendious ascent unto the holy Mount, than most do take care to inquire after. The root whence this mischief springs, as all agree, is a desire of civil power or greatness ; which then only (in vulgar esteem) brancheth itself into ambition, when this greatness is sought for by unlawful means. But this is a mist of error or hypocrisy in the mind, which riseth from foggy desires of this gross humour in the heart. For we may, as often we do, use lawful means for compassing most unlawful ends : so may the end which we earnestly intend be exceeding good, and yet the intention of it very naught. Though Atheism be the usual fruit of ambition come to full growth, or thoroughly ripe, yet many in a lower degree ambitiously minded, often seek after good places in churches or commonweal, with earnest desire to do more good in them than others would ; howbeit, the very accomplishment of these seeming good desires or intentions makes them worse men than they were before ; and their country can never gain much by such exchanges ; as that emperor intimated to his soldiers, *bonum militem perdidistis, imperatorem pessimum creastis*, “ by losing a good pastor for a corrupt prelate, or a tolerable private man for a naughty magistrate.” Admit, the party thus advanced might empty the commonweal of many enormities wherewith it had

^a Luke, xiv. 11.

been, and without him might be, continually pestered; yet the usual consequences of high advancements upon so bad foundations, which, like eclipses, have not their far-spreading effects till many years after, add much to the fulfilling of their iniquity with whom they live, and cause God's secret judgments to hasten their pace. Did we not look more on the visible means whereby good or evil seems to be wrought, than on his invisible power, that can contrive our final happiness by misfortunes, and dispose advantages to our utter undoing; his will, revealed against self-exaltation and ambition, would warrant the orthodoxal truth of this paradox, that, how sincere soever men's purposes may seem unto themselves, or how successful soever their projects may be held in politic guess, yet, whosoever he be that shall affect higher dignities in church or common-weal, before he have fully conquered all temptations whereto these lower mansions are exposed, doth seek a certain mischief to himself and others. But for a positive rule to secure our hearts from all contagion of this hellish weed, it sufficeth not that our consciences can give us full assurance we have been most vigilant, trusty, and careful in our former callings, ere we look after greater matters: for, though this rule hold negatively true, "none can be fashioned for greater honour, but by faithful discharge of lesser offices;" many, notwithstanding, may be fitly qualified for the one, and yet very unapt for the other: as divers plants well taken, and likely to thrive every day better than other in the soil wherein they have been first set, would hardly prosper in another more commodious for better purposes.

Besides this perfection of sincerity, or hope of its increase in our accustomed calling ; unto such a qualification for an higher as shall not endanger the growth of faith : to compare as well the quality as the strength of our present inclinations, with the several impulsions or allurements of that promotion we desire, is very requisite. Even after we be secured, upon calculation most exact, of our force and skill to resist or prevent these, the very desire of rising higher, unless suggested by the concurrence of God's providence, or some peculiar instinct free from all suspicious attendants, or rather accompanied with good thoughts, or other pledges of internal comfort, is very dangerous. To follow the natural or usual working of our will, forecasting means of our advancement, is to exalt ourselves ; and that, in the issue, is to desire to be brought low. The Jews' pressing for the highest places at feasts was but a symptom or manifestation of this inward distemper of heart, unto which our Saviour applies this medicine : " When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him ; and he that bade thee and him come and say unto thee, Give this man place ; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher : then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." ^a It

^a Luke, xiv. 8, 9. &c. *Vide* Prov. xxv. 7.

was not his purpose, at this or other time, to give any rules for civil compliment, or fashionable behaviour amongst strangers at the table, but such as were parabolical, and had especial reference to the internal frame or composal of men's resolutions. The true meaning of the former parable is this, that, seeing here we have no abiding city, but continue as pilgrims, God's hospitals or almsmen; the meanest estate, furnished with a tolerable supply of necessaries, should best content our private choice; always referring our advancement to the sweet disposition or invitation of the Divine Providence. Our Saviour himself, though exactly accomplished for the right governance of more worlds than this world hath provinces, "did not take unto himself the honour to be made high-priest, but he that said unto him, This day have I begotten thee^a," did thereto call him. And, seeing to symbolize with the imitable perfections of his human nature in the days of his humiliation is the most immediate and formal effect of faith, he that desires to have it prosper in his heart should first seek to frame the like mind in himself that was in Christ, even to evacuate his breast, though not of all hopes, yet of all present desires or actual addressments to raise his estate or fortunes, grounding his expectation of future glory in true humility and contentedness, with the lowest place amongst God's people, "not taking honour to himself until he be called of God," as was Aaron.

2. But to speak of an inward or particular calling to *any* course of life, seems but as a relation of some

^a Heb. v. 5.

dream or fancy in these wretched times, wherein, of such as would be thought religious, and bear the names of divines, the most are more ready to impeach their own loyalty towards Christ, and make wilful forfeiture of faith and honesty, by open profession of ambitious and unconscionable aspiring resolutions, than to disparage their wit or sufficiency (as they conceive it) in the world's judgment, by renouncing their slender uncertain hopes, or remote interest in promotion, which cannot be sought for without excessive pains and trouble, and these always great, with pining care how to maintain or keep it gotten, before they can be sure to get it. "Ye are of your father the devil," saith our Saviour to the Jews, "and his works you fulfil, for he was a murderer from the beginning^a;" yet was his rebellious pride and ambition the mother of his murderous mind. The lowest rank of his fellow angels, never affecting to climb higher than the places first appointed them, remain to this day loyal towards God, loving one towards another, and kind to man, their neighbour though inferior creature. But for Lucifer to shine as the morning star amongst his brethren did not suffice, unless he far exceed the moon, and become like the midday sun in glory. According to the exorbitancy of this desire, and height of his fall thereby procured, hath the maliciousness of his dejected pride, and deep dissimulation for bringing his murderous plots about, continued since. Whose sons, then, may we suppose they are, who, never contented with their natural station, much bettered by many casual accessions

^a John, viii. 44.

and daily additions of God's temporal blessings, scarce give themselves respite to think how well God hath done by them already; so eagerly are they set to soar higher and higher, without fixing any period to their towering thoughts; as if they had said in their hearts, "We will ascend above the height of the clouds, and we will be like the Most High."^a Besides their participation of this hereditary quality, or first sin of Satan, the preposterous devices of men ambitious to effect their wills, rightly blazoned, proclaim their pedigree. For as Lucifer since his fall, albeit still like himself, not the son but the father or prince of darkness, doth outwardly transform himself into an angel of light; so this painted Helen, the mistress of modern thoughts, ambition, though always in travel with raven, murder, and cruelty, is notwithstanding for outward resemblance, as one well observes, the most exquisite ape of that angelical virtue, Christian charity: "It suffereth all things, it endureth all things, it believeth all things, it doth not behave itself unseemly, it is kind^b," not with respect to God's glory, or any spiritual end, but to the recompense of present reward, or in hope of gaining their favour which may advantage it. Not late experience of our own misery can make us poor men more compassionate to our miserable brethren, than one ambitious man is courteous or kind unto another, or ready to further him in causes that do not cross his own preferment. And happy were they in their mutual kindness, were not these full of cruelty towards the poor and needy. From a general

^a Isaiah, xiv.^b 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

consideration how mightily that golden rule, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them^a,” is violated by the mighty of our times, I was moved some years ago to utter publicly, what no experiments which I could since observe, as yet occasion me to recall; that if all the calamities either immediately laid upon men of meaner rank by God, or procured by their own folly and oversight, were laid together in one balance, all would not equalize the grievances which befall them by the mutual gratifications of great ones, who either spare not to sacrifice the life and substance of the needy (with whose miseries the huge distance of their places will not suffer them to be affected) unto others’ luxury or superfluous pleasures, with whose unnecessary wants, through the vicinity of their estates, and like conditions, they easily and exactly sympathise; or else, to ease themselves of some light care in preferring their dependants, respect not what heavy burdens fall upon inferiors by these unnecessary advancements of their favourites. Again, unto what mean services and base employments for satisfying bodily lust, or desire of revenge, will these infernal sons of pride prostitute themselves, to gain some present interest with hope of future sovereignty in seely impotent and discontented souls? And did he not well characterise the ambitious man, that said, *ut dominetur aliis prius servit: curvatur obsequio ut honore donetur?* How many in our times would be willing, so God would grant it, to take Ham’s curse upon them for their present blessing, even to be *servi*

^a Matt. vii. 12.

servorum, slaves to great men's servants, so they might hope at length to domineer in the tents of Shem, or bear rule over the tribe of Levi? Lastly, there is a property wherein the hellish fiend, the bewitched lover, and the ambitious mind, are univocal communicants. For though all of them daily complain of their vexations as being hourly tortured with those things which they most affect, yet can no inducement draw them to desist, still as it were striving to entangle themselves faster in the cords or bonds of their cruel racks.

3. Or, if the troubles of mind wherewith the ambitious man's suits are still solicited, and their accomplishment perpetually attended, did want that sting whereby even his sweetest delights become too dear, he were to be thought very unwise, or wise in his generation only, that would forego the pleasant opportunities of a private life, for the right setting of his faith, for the increase of his devotion, or gaining greater frequency of more familiar and secret conference with the spirit of truth; albeit he were sure to gain a kingdom by employing his wits another way. "For what doth it advantage a man to gain the whole world," with danger "of losing his own soul?"^a yet is he very likely to lose it, that hath but small time to seek it; and as one saith ^b, *nemo occupatus bonam mentem invenit*, he that is much busied in other matters, whereunto God particularly hath not called him, can hardly be at leisure to search, much less to find, in what terms his own soul stands with her Creator, or faithfully to make up those accounts our Saviour exacts at our hands ere we can be worthy of his service. Yet of all businesses, ambitious

^a Mark, viii. 36.

^b Seneca.

employments most hinder the true knowledge of ourselves, whose first elements are, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Dust, then, being our native soil and last home, to which we must by a decree most certain one time or other, but uncertain whether sooner or later, repair; by soaring aloft, we do but make our wearisome way the longer and crookeder, and our fall, especially if sudden, more grievous. And seeing such aspiring thoughts as we harbour did overturn the great tempter himself, that which a religious father observed of pride in general, is most proper to this branch at whose roots we strike, untimely desire of promotion: "Such as are overgrown herewith need no tempter: the devil cannot wish them more harm than they are ready to do themselves, by zealous following that course, which brought him to his fall. Cease I shall to wonder hereafter what spirits should move such young and tender olive plants, as scarce thrive under the walls of God's house, or such vines as hardly bear fruit in the warm and well-fenced vale, to affect removal to the cold and open mountains, exposed to blasts of noisome winds. Is it their glory to be above others of their own rank and education? This might be purchased with less danger to themselves, and more good to God's church, if they sought to overtop them more by their own proper height, or seasonable well-furnished growth, than by mere advantage of ground. For when "every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain made low, until the crooked become straight and the uneven places plain^a;" the fruit which hath

^a Isa. xl. 4.

grown in the vale will appear both higher and better than the ordinary offspring of the mountains. Oh that men were so wise in heart to consider that the lower their place, so not exposed to floods of violence, the apter it is to suck in the dew of God's blessing in greatest plenty.

4. The poor Galilean, or vulgar Jew, had liberty to follow Christ every hour, not ashamed to be seen at midday in his company. But the conspicuous eminency of Nicodemus's place compels him to repair unto his Lord, like a thief, by night^a; an ill abodance, that those heavenly mysteries wherewith he sought to enlighten his mind should seem obscure. This man was grown so great in Israel, that he could hardly be taken down to the pitch of childhood, or infancy, into which mould of necessity he must be cast ere he can be born anew, or receive the kingdom of heaven aright. Men, in our times, of far greater place than Nicodemus was, may safely profess themselves Christ's disciples; for not to be such in profession, or not to show themselves sometimes openly in the assembly of his saints, is their greatest shame and ignominy: but so to strip themselves of the flesh, of the world, of all prerogatives of birth or secular eminency, as they must, ere they can be regenerated by the Spirit, or become new men in Christ Jesus, would utterly spoil their goodly fashion in the world's eye; in which, if we might examine their hearts by their practice, or avowed resolutions, they only glory. Confess Christ, then, in speech they may; but how is it possible they should

^a John, iii, 1, 2, &c.

truly believe in him when they love the praise of men more than rebuke for his sake, and receive honour one of another, not seeking that honour which cometh of God alone? To believe Christ, in ordinary phrase, is less than to believe him; yet he that seeks but in the lowest degree to believe in him, must abandon that humour which he hath discovered, as the principal root of Jewish unbelief, or denial of him. Was that, then, such gross ambition as our corrupt language only takes notice of? was it immoderate desire of greater places than they enjoyed? or rather only fear lest they should no longer enjoy these? The sight of his miracles, and evidence of his divine predictions, had won the assent of some, even amongst the rulers^a, unto his doctrine as true, whilst simply considered, or compared only with the speculative arguments brought against it by his adversaries. But what they believed in part as true, they did not assent unto as good, or not as better than the praise of men; for, saith the Evangelist, “They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Did they, then, expect to have their praises sounded out by some panegyrical encomiast in solemn assemblies, or unworthily to gain an honourable report amongst posterity? No, these are rewards of resolution in speech and action, not of silence. Just suspicion we can gather none of any such haughty conceit, or desire so far exorbitant, seeing all they could expect, for not confessing Christ, was, not to have their good names or fames called in question; or, to speak as it is written, “because of the Pharisees they did not confess him,

^a John, xii. 42,

lest they should be cast out of the synagogue." Liable they were unto the former verdict of "loving the praise of men more than the praise of God," inasmuch as they feared the loss of their places or reputation which they enjoyed, more than Christ's censure of such as are "ashamed of him or his words before men." Ashamed of him most of us in our own judgment are not; for, in that gross construction which hypocrisy suggests of his speech, indeed we cannot, as being brought up in a state, which, as it acknowledgeth him for the Redeemer and judge of the world, so is it able to disgrace us and our acquaintance enduring life, and both our posterities after death, if we should deny him openly before the Jew or Turk. But the words which he spake, and must judge the Jew for refusing him, will in that last day condemn us also, if we receive not them.^a Such as receive not him, receive not God that sent him, and he that receiveth not his words, receiveth not him. He that is ashamed of the one, is, upon the same terms, ashamed of the other; whilst we have his Gospel and other apostolical writings, not believing them better than these Jews late mentioned did him, it were hypocritical, even Jewish credulity, to think we should have believed him, though we had been eye-witnesses of his miracles, or resurrection from the dead. How many, then, of higher fortunes especially, can we, without breach of charity towards our Saviour and the truth of his Gospel, suppose this day living, that can justly say their hearts are free from such roots or seeds of ambition, as have been discovered in these Jewish rulers; yet

^a John, xii. 47, 48.

these such as admit no compossibility with the seed of faith. What cause so good, what truth so manifest, or so highly concerning the honour of God, what persons so dear unto his Son, in whose furtherance or just defence, either fear or sharp censure in a civil, or of excommunication in an ecclesiastic court, loss of their places, or dejection from such rule or dignity as in church or commonweal they bear, will not make most men either afraid or ashamed to speak, (at least) openly to oppose their superiors in honour only, not in knowledge of Christ's laws or precepts? Is not this to "love the praise of men more than the praise of God?" to "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons?"^a Or if the objects of our usual fear be in themselves of less force to withdraw us from confessing Christ before men, than the temptations which these Jews had, (for what to them more terrible than to be cast out of the synagogue?) our faith must needs be less than theirs was, though theirs no better than none, because it vanisheth as fast upon the first approach, or rather conceit, of persecution, as the morning dew doth at the sun's appearance. But if the Pharisees, whose censure they feared, would have countenanced our Saviour's doctrine, they had been as forward confessors as the best of us, and Christians altogether as good as any that love the applause or fear the check of men in authority, when truth, disgraced or destitute of assistance, requires their testimony.

5. If the least spice of this disease be so dangerous, what mischief may the heat of it procure unto the soul

^a James, ii. 1.

of man? It may, as it often doth, inflame the heart in which it kindles with ardent desires of false martyrdom, but sears the conscience that it can never become truly Christian until every sparkle of this strange fire be extinguished, and the sore it bred moistened with tears, or mollified with true humility. Minds tainted with other corruptions seldom shrink in defence of the truth whereto they assent, until assaulted by violence or pinched with some real persecution. Ambition only, though in the lowest degree, or but kindling in tickling love of applause, or jealousies of ill report, is daunted with shadows, and made to fly the field for fear of being lashed with absent tongues. And no marvel, when as the reproachful censure of the multitude, or of men on whose voice and sentence it most depends, (though bequeathed by our Saviour as an especial blessing, descending by inheritance to his chosen from their fathers the true prophets,) is apprehended by the ambitious or popular minded as the most grievous curse that can befall them. "Blessed are ye (saith our Saviour) when men hate you, and when they separate you, and revile you, and put out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and be glad; for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for after this manner their fathers did to the prophets."^a On the contrary, what he denounced as a woe is made chief matter of their joy, that affect an universal esteem of honest discreet men. "Woe be to you when all men speak well of you; for so did their fathers to the false prophets."^b Thus much of this poisonous weed, whose

^a Luke, vi. 22, 23.^b Ver. 17.

fertile growth in the clergy seems to be provoked by covetousness in the laity. For the more unconscionable patrons be, and the more worldly or troublesome parishioners be, the more unsatiated are many ministers' desires of dignities or pluralities; as if they sought to beat their adversaries at their own weapons, to outweary the minor sort in suits of law, to outvie the greater in secular pomp or bravery. Many other branches there be of voluptuous life, through whose deceitfulness the word of life is secretly choked, or stifled in minds otherwise well affected, and by good husbandry apt to fructify: but their particular discussion I must refer to the reader's private meditations, contenting myself only to touch the generality.

6. The course of a Christian's life may most fitly be compared to a navigation; his body is as the bark, the human soul the owner, and the Spirit of God the pilot. As there is no seafaring man that can be secured of continual calm, but must resolve, as to meet with storms and with rough and grown seas, so to redeem himself and his passengers from their rage, sometimes with loss of freightage, sometimes of tackling or (in desperate extremities) of the vessel with her burden; so is there no Christian that can expect or may desire a general exemption from temptations, but must be content to prevent the shipwreck of faith and conscience, one while with loss of goods or other appurtenances of mortal life; otherwhiles with loss of some bodily part; (for if either hand or foot shall offend us, it must be cut off, rather than Christ should be forsaken;) sometimes with losing *all* feasts of friendship or dependence; (for

he that loves father or mother, brother or sister, kith or kin, superior or inferior, more than Christ, is not worthy of him;) sometimes with dissolution of body and soul; for "whosoever will save his life (when Christ's cause shall demand the adventure of it) shall lose it, and he that will lose it shall save it."^a Now where the fraughtage or furniture of life is precious, as if our fare be delicate, our other pleasures or contentments in their kind rare and delectable, our alliance or acquaintance choice and amiable, our revenues ample or authority great, the flesh, once tempted to forsake these for preserving conscience upright, and confessing Christ, is ready to wrangle with the spirit; as a greedy or jealous owner would do with a skilful pilot advising in a tempest to lessen the danger by lightening the ship. If the commodities be gross or base, the owner, perhaps, can be well content to have some part cast overboard; but if costly and dear, or such as his heart is much set upon, he had rather adventure to perish with them under hatches than to see them cast into the sea; for to part with them is death. Some Christians, when blasts of temptation arise, rather than they will break with their friends and acquaintances, do finally sink with them, as ships are sometimes cast away through the owners' unwillingness to cut the cables or lose the anchors: some, when storms of persecution begin to rage, rather than they will hazard loss of body, lands, or goods in truth's defence, drown both body and soul in perdition. Seeing the wisest of us, as we are by nature, or left to our own directions, are more cunning

^a Matt. x. 39.

merchants than mariners, and for the most part as ignorant of the voyages we undertake as skilful in the commodities we traffic for, the best resolution for our safety would be to load ourselves with no greater quantity of riches, honour, or other nutriment of voluptuous life, than shall be appointed us by the peculiar instruction of God's Spirit, which best knows the true burden of those brittle barks, how well or ill they are able to abide rough seas, or such storms as He alone foresees are likely to assault us. And seeing we are all, by profession, lastly bound for a city which is above, whose commodities cannot be purchased with gold, or silver, or precious stones, much less may we truck for them with our unclean worldly pleasures or delights, which may not be so much as admitted within the walls or gates; our wisest resolution, in the second place, is to account even the choicest commodities that sea or land or this inferior world can afford but as trash or luggage, serving only for balance in the passage: so shall we be ready to part with it when any tempest shall arise, and if extremity urge us, like St. Paul and his company^a, to save our souls with loss of the bark that bears us, and of all the whole burden besides.

7. But this advice may seem like that philosophical fancy, who would persuade us that splendant metal, which is enstamped with Cæsar's image and superscription, and furnisheth us with all things necessary, were but a piece of purified clay, or earth and water close compacted. Shall we, whom none makes reckoning of, bring down the price of these things, which men in

^a Acts, xxvii. 38, &c.

authority, and the common consent of nations, would have raised into the skies? Shall we believe ourselves, before our betters, that bodily pleasures, great preferment, or other contentments, which almost all account worthy of their daily and best employment, are nothing worth? Sure the heathen thought this very argument no better.

“ *Nugæ, non si quid turbida Roma
Elevet, accedas, examenve improbum in illa
Castiges trutina : nec te quæsiveris extra.*”^a

“ Deem not all naught unsteady Rome accounteth light ;
Her scales are false, and cannot weigh men's worth aright :
But nought without can him that's well within affright.”

Let us take counsel of our own hearts, and they will better inform us than ten thousand by-standers, that live but by hearsay, and see only others' outside, not what is within themselves. Though we have riches and all other materials of worldly solace in greatest abundance, yet our lives consist not in them, much less doth our felicity. Now, as in all men's judgments, he lives much better that is able to live of his own, than he which hath the same supplies of life in more competent measure from his friends' benevolence ; so much happier is that soul which hath delight and contentment competent within itself, than that which hath them heaped upon it from without ; seeing all the delights or pleasures these can beget, suppose a precedent pain or sorrow, bred from desires unnecessary in themselves, but such as lay a necessity upon us to satisfy them while we have them. It is pleasant, no doubt, to a woman with child, to have what she longs for, but

^a Persius, Sat. 1.

much more pleasant to a manlike mind, never to be troubled with such longings. Not to need honour, wealth, bodily pleasures, or other branches of voluptuous life, is a better ground of true peace and joy, than full satisfaction of our eager desires, whilst they are fixed on these or other transitories. The strength of our spirits (by whose united force our union with the Spirit of truth must be ratified) is much dissipated by the distractions which their very presence or entertainment necessarily require; so doth the life and relish of all true delight internal (into which the true peace of conscience must be engrafted) exhale by continual thinking on things without us. Finally, whiles we trouble ourselves about many things, it is impossible we should ever entirely possess our own souls with patience, or make the best of them for purchasing that *unum necessarium*, that one thing which is only necessary. But these are points which require more full peculiar treatises, to which many philosophers, especially Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, and Epictetus have spoken much, very pertinent to true divinity; as shall (by God's grace) appear in the article "Of Everlasting Life;" as in some other particular discourses framed some years ago for my own private resolution. The counsel I here commend unto the reader is no way dissonant unto St. Paul's advice unto his dearest son^a: "Godliness, with contentment, is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out: and having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. But they that will

^a 2 Tim. vi. 6, &c.

be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith."

A SERMON ON LUKE, XVI. 9.

[WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH, M.A.]

LUKE, xvi. 9.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

“THE children of this world,” saith Christ, “are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” To make which good, our Saviour, in so much of the chapter as goes before my text, brings in a story, or, as they call it, a parable, of a cunning fellow, yet no great projector neither, no very subtle politician ; notwithstanding, one who, being in an extremity, turned out of his office for mispending his master’s goods, had found out a shift, and that by mere cozenage, to procure so much as would serve to keep him, indeed, not according to the port and fashion after which before he had lived, but only to maintain him in meat and drink, out of danger of starving, or, which was more fearful, because more full of trouble or dishonour, hard labour or begging.

2. Surely it *had* been no hard matter for our Saviour,

who knew all whatsoever was in man, to have discovered more subtle projects, plots of a finer and more curious contrivance than this fellow's; but this, it seems, would serve his turn well enough for the purpose for which he made use of it. And, to say the truth, there cannot be imagined an example more exactly suiting, more closely applicable to his intent; which was not to discredit and dishearten his followers, by comparing, ay, and preferring the cunning of an ordinary fellow, a mere bailiff or steward, before that spiritual heavenly wisdom to which they pretend; nor, secondly, to instruct them by indirect and unwarrantable courses to provide for themselves hereafter: but chiefly this —

3. To teach us, by objecting to our view a man who, by his own negligence and carelessness being brought to an extremity, (for there was no necessity he should be brought to these plunges; a little timely care and providence, even ordinary honesty, would easily have warranted and preserved him,) had upon the sudden found out a trick of his office, — namely, by proceeding in his old courses of wasting his master's substance to the enriching of his fellow servants, thereby gained their good wills, that for the time following they might preserve him from perishing.

4. Our Saviour, I say, by this example, would teach us, that since God hath placed us here in this world as his stewards, he has put into our hands his goods, his riches, to be dispensed for his use and advantage: and such stewards we are, who have advantages infinitely more urgent, and pressing us to an honest faithful discharge of our office, than this man in the parable ever

had; as, first, we must of necessity fail, and be cashiered of our office. All the power of heaven and earth cannot procure us a perpetuity in it. The case did not stand so with this man, for it was merely his own fault to deserve discarding; and, besides, having deserved that censure, it was his misfortune, too, that his lord should come to the knowledge of it (for it is no impossible thing that a steward should thrive by his lord's loss, and yet never be called to an account for it). And, secondly, upon our behaviour in this our office depends the everlasting welfare of our souls and bodies; we shall for ever be disposed of according to the honest or unfaithful discharge of our place. If ill, Lord, what shall become of us? Where shall we appear in that great day of account? I dare not almost tell you the issue of it. But if we have carried ourselves as faithful servants, propose to yourselves your own conditions, give your thoughts licence and scope to be excessive and overflowing in their desires; if the whole extension and capacity of your thoughts be not satisfied and filled to the brim, with measure pressed down and running over, God himself (which is impossible to imagine) will prove a deceiving unfaithful master.

5. These things therefore considered, without question it doth infinitely concern us to consult and project what we mean to do with our riches, to what employment we intend to put those honours and that power which God hath conferred on us in this life; whether to receive them as our good things, to go away contented with them as our rewards, our final rewards, expecting no other good things from God after them;

or, which is our Saviour's advice, use them as means and helps of attaining blessings above all conceivable proportion exceeding them; so dispensing and providently scattering them abroad, that, against our time of need (which sooner or later will undoubtedly come), we may oblige to ourselves such friends, so gracious and prevailing with our Master, who, either by their prayers and intercessions, or some other way which we know not, may procure for us admission into our Master's joys, to be no longer stewards and servants, but friends and sons. Thus, by the help and benefit of this "mammon of unrighteousness" in my text, these "little things," even the least blessings that God has to bestow upon us, so called in the verse following; and in the next but one to that, these "things of other men;" as if they were trifles not worthy the owning, if compared with what rewards may be had in exchange for them, purchasing to ourselves everlasting and glorious rewards. By the assistance of our riches (in the expression of St. Paul) "laying up for ourselves a foundation of good works against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life."

6. And this I suppose to be the force and meaning of this ἐπιμύθιον, or moral of the parable, which Christ hath closely contrived and pressed into these few words: "Make to yourselves friends of the," &c. In which words I shall observe unto you these three general parts: —

1. What we must expect at last, notwithstanding all the riches and pomps of this world; that is, "to fail." Christ, you see, makes no question at all of it; he takes

it for granted, where he says, "that when ye fail;" implying that certainly fail we must.

2. This being supposed, that fail we must, the counsel of Christ comes in very seasonably, namely, to provide for the main, to take order that though we ourselves sink, yet we may procure us friends to support us in our necessities; and that is, "by making to ourselves friends of the mammon," &c.

3. The comfortable issue and convenience which shall accrue unto us by those friends thus purchased; that by them "to be received into everlasting," &c. these in the order proposed.

7. You do not expect, I am sure, that I should about seriously to persuade you that you shall not live here for ever. For whom should I seek to persuade? God forbid I should be so uncharitable as to think, but suspect, that ever I should find occasion to make use of any persuasions for such a purpose. Indeed a very good man (it was the prophet David) once said in his prosperity, "I shall never be removed; thou, Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong."^a But this well said of him, think you? It seems not; presently, to confute this his confidence, "the Lord did but turn his face away from him, and he was troubled."^b Yet surely such a speech as this could not be spoken upon better grounds; for this his assurance it seems, proceeded not out of any presumptuous confidence of his own strength or policy, but only out of consideration of God's especial providence shown in his wonderful preservation from many great

^a Psalm xxx. 6.

^b Verse 7.

imminent dangers, and in preferring him from a low contemptible fortune to the rule and dominion over his people.

8. There is another fellow in a parable*, who though he came short of David in this his unwarrantable confidence and presumption upon that foundation of riches and wealth, which with unwearied anxiety and care he had laid up, notwithstanding was more suddenly and unanswerably confuted; for he did not promise to himself a perpetuity; only he imagined to himself (as he thought reasonably) that since he had at last obtained that which he had aimed at, and which had cost him so many years' travel, it were fit for him now to enjoy the fruit which he had so dearly bought. And in a joyful contemplation of this his happiness, he enters into dialogue with his soul: "Soul," saith he, "now take thy rest;" no more shalt thou be vexed, and even consumed with the painful and violent thirst after riches; thou hast that laid up for thee which shall abundantly satisfy all thy desires. All my business hereafter shall be to find out ways how to repay unto my soul all those pleasures which heretofore I have denied unto myself; I have store sufficient for many years' expenses safely laid up in my barns. Yet, for all this man's thus pleasing himself with assured promises of many years' happiness, if you will but vouchsafe to inquire after him the very next day after he spoke thus, his garners it is likely you may yet find standing, thronged and oppressed with the abundance of corn. But for his soul (for whose sake all this ado had been kept) the Lord knows what

* Luke, xii. 16.

became of that: it was hurried away no man can tell whither.

9. Now the thing that it becomes me to desire at your hands from the consideration of these two examples is this: not to require of you to believe that you must once fail (for that, I suppose, were needless), nor yet to dissuade you from allowing to yourselves a reasonable use of, and moderate lawful pleasures from, that abundance of blessings wherewith God hath enriched you beyond all other men; but to beseech you, that this meditation, that certainly you must fail, may be no unwelcome thought to you; that when the time shall come that you must leave these riches and pleasures which God has given you here to enjoy, it may not come upon you as an unexpected misfortune, as a thing you were afraid of, and would willingly be content to avoid.

10. I confess this were a meditation sufficient to discourage and quite dishearten a man that were resolved to take up his rest in the pleasures and preferments of this world, that were content to sit down satisfied with such a slight happiness as this life is able to afford him; for one who would make riches his strong city, a place of refuge and security, a fortress whereto he would have recourse in all his extremities, and from whence he would expect safety in all dangers and troubles which may assail him; for what were that but to withdraw him from his strongholds, and leave him unfortified and exposed to any injury and misfortune? How could I be more injurious to such a man, than to vex and affright him with such sad melancholic

thoughts as these, that the time will come when that strong castle of his, his riches, shall be undermined and demolished, when he shall be left naked and defenceless? At which time, if it were possible for him to retain his riches, which before he made his bulwark and place of security, yet he will find them then but paper walls, unable to stand the weakest battery.

11. But I hope better things of you, beloved Christians, even things which accompany salvation. And, indeed, why should I not? Who can forbid me to hope so? For, alas, I know you not. I have no reason to assure myself of the contrary. And, then, I should be most inexcusably uncharitable if I should not even rejoice in this my hope. I see God hath plentifully showered down upon you, almost overwhelmed you with all the blessings of this life. He has, moreover, given you peaceable times to enjoy them; (blessed be his holy name for it, and a thousand blessings be returned into the bosom of his anointed for his most pious Christian-like care to confirm this peace, and to preserve it from interruption!) God, I say, has given you leisure and opportunity to enjoy and improve these your riches for your everlasting happiness. A comfort which he has denied almost to all other nations; nothing abroad but "wars and rumours of wars;" no joy nor comfort but only in the effusion of precious Christian blood, nothing but sacking of towns and invasions of countries, God only knows upon how just pretensions. But, which is above all other blessings, (indeed, without which all the rest will prove very curses,) God has given you an abundant plentiful use of his blessed word and sacra-

ments every week several times (till now), a worthy and able clergy to put you in mind how great an account you are to make to Almighty God of these his blessings, and what extraordinary interest is expected at your hands.

12. Let me not, therefore, I beseech you, be your enemy, if I prove troublesome to any slumbering lethargic spirit; if I put him in mind that the time will come when sleep shall for ever depart from his eyes, and that if his slumber last till a trumpet awake him, darkness he may find, most palpable Egyptian darkness, but not darkness commodious to call on and procure sleep, not very convenient to take one's rest in. Forgive, I beseech you, my importunity, if I earnestly desire you frequently to represent to your minds a time of failing; and presently after that a severe inexorable judge, requiring a strict exact account of your behaviour in your stewardship; if I beseech you, from the consideration of the foolish virgins, not to put far from you the coming of the bridegroom, not to frame to yourselves reasons and probabilities why he is not likely to come yet a good while; for he himself has told you he will come as a thief in the night, and therefore, when you are thus secure and slumbering yourselves, create a night, a fit season for him to come unawares upon you. For if you be unprovided of oil in your lamps, of good works which may shine before men, and the door be once shut, talk not of any new-devised faith, and I know not what assurance; there is no possibility of ever having it opened; but you shall be forced to remain exposed to all dangers, to all manner of misfortunes: not

one shall be found to befriend you, and to receive you into everlasting habitations.

13. And, I pray you, consider, that if the apprehension of these things, conceived, not as present, but as to be expected, it may be many years hence, be so distasteful and ominous to flesh and blood, who will be able to abide the time when it shall indeed overtake him? If, now, in these days of leisure and forbearance, (a season which God out of his glorious mercy hath allowed us on purpose to spend in such thoughts as these, in projecting against the evil day,) the meditation thereof bring such anguish and torment along with it, what terrible insupportable effects will it work in us when we shall find ourselves surprised by it, and caught as in a snare? If a man can no sooner hear such things related, or but seriously think upon them, though in the height of his jollity, but straight, as if some ill news had been told him, as if he had heard some sad tragical story of his own misfortunes, he will presently recoil from his mirth, pleasure will become troublesome and distasteful to him, — oh, with what anguish and vexation of spirit, with what agony of soul, shall they be entertained when they come in earnest!

14. Observe, therefore, I beseech you, that our Saviour does not bid you when you fail to make yourselves friends; no, alas, that is not the time to make friends in; then is the season when you are to expect comfort and assistance from those friends which you have gained before, in the time when you were furnished with such good things as were likely to oblige men unto you. What title, then, can be found out equal to

express the folly and madness of such people ; who, as if God had created them on purpose for the pleasures and vanities of this world, make that the whole business of their lives ; and, as if the care of their souls' everlasting disposal were but an employment of an hour's despatch, will not vouchsafe so fruitlessly to cast away any part of the time, when their souls are vigorous and healthful, about such a trifling design, but destine their last few hours, when they are unable for any business else, to settle for themselves an estate of eternity ?

15. But because I have not the leisure, now, to prosecute this argument as fully as it may deserve, give me leave, I pray you, in brief, to present to your view a man brought to such an extremity as this ; one fastened and chained unto the bed of sickness, one that has already received within himself the messages of death, — “ death beginning ” (in the language of the Psalmist) “ to gnaw upon him.” Take the pains, I beseech you, to imagine to yourselves (and it will require some courage but to consider it) what unquiet busy thoughts shall then possess him, what terrible affrighting meditations shall then be suggested to him, when he shall be forced to apprehend that now he has but a very small portion of time left him ; and yet, for all that, all the business for the despatching of which he came into the world is left undone ; the counsel and good intention of God, out of which he gave him his riches, being utterly defeated ; scarce one friend made that will vouchsafe to look upon him now in his necessity ; but, on the contrary, many sore enemies procured, that will be ready

to cry for vengeance against him. No account to be found of the dispensation of those goods which God has given him, but such a one as will serve to feed and nourish the distemper and sickness of his thoughts; so much (may be) spent in the prosecution and fulfilling of his ungodly lusts, so much in gorgeous raiment and delicious feeding; yet all this while scarce one poor Lazarus obliged. Now all the remedy that is to be had in such an exigence as this is, to have the next preacher sent for, who must instil a little comfortable divinity into him, to make him sleep, and so his soul departs the Lord knows whither. And yet these are but the beginning of sorrows; but what the end and perfection of them will be, I confess I have not the courage to tell you.

16. But yet, for all this, I know men are apt so much to favour themselves in their security, they will be ready to produce that famous example of the thief on the cross to confute me, and to testify that even he that shall at the last push, as it were, have recourse unto God's mercy, is not altogether hopeless. Besides, did not he which came the last hour of the day to labour in the vineyard receive the same wages with them who had suffered the toil and heat of the whole day? For the thief on the cross, there can lie no exception against the example. But yet consider, I pray you, that from the beginning of the world till the time that the Scripture canon was sealed up, there is not to be found one example more to equal it. Besides, it was done at the time of Christ's suffering; a season wherein God, in that one act of the redemption of the world, by the

death of his Son, expressed the very utmost of his mercy, and discovered unto the world, as it were, in one entire sum, all the riches and treasures of his goodness. If, therefore, at such a time, he was pleased to work a miracle of mercy upon one who, probably, having spent his whole life in ungodly forbidden courses, had not, till then, light upon any extraordinary opportunities and means, able to break in pieces, and melt his flinty, obdurate heart; can this example, then, be any advantage to you, who, every day almost, have more than sufficient means and offers of grace, and are continually threatened with the danger of deferring your repentance, and of prolonging the time of making up your accounts; since you neither do, nor must, know the day nor hour when God will expect them at your hands?

17. As concerning the man which was called the last hour of the day to labour in the vineyard, I pray you take notice, that this man was a labourer; and, though he took pains but for a short time, yet labour he did: whereas he that shall defer his repentance and amendment of life till his last hour, if he indeed prove sorry for his sins, yet labour he cannot: the best that he can do is to make offers and resolutions to work the good work of God, if it shall please Him to spare him life; but that those resolutions of his shall be accepted with God, instead of real very labour indeed, I find no commission to assure you. But I confess it is something unseasonably done of me, to stand, so long at least, upon such sullen melancholic meditations as those are; especially now, in the midst of this solemn glorious feast.

Therefore I am resolved, even abruptly, to break through them, and to hasten to my second general, which is the counsel which our Saviour gives us upon this consideration, that necessarily we must fail, namely, to provide and seriously project against that time, by all the means that we can make, to oblige to ourselves friends in that extremity; expressed in these words: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness."

18. Mammon of unrighteousness? What is that? Shall I deal freely and honestly with you? Indeed I will: for woe unto me if I should dare to come into this place to flatter you; and woe unto me if I should dare to come into this place to vent my spleen against any. Then all this, for which there is such ado kept, not only here, but all the world over; such making of friends, nay, such undermining of friends, so many dangers sought out and despised;—this is the mammon of unrighteousness. An untoward name, I confess, for a thing so much set by, so carefully and ambitiously courted, so insatiably thirsted after; but yet a name of Christ's devising. He has afforded this idol, riches, no better a title; and therefore I must and dare call them so any where.

19. But may it not be lawful to inquire after, or give some guesses, at least, at the reasons which might move our Saviour to put so disgraceful a name upon riches? Without question, it is not only lawful to be so curious, but also very useful and expedient. A main reason (I have heard) is, because, ordinarily, riches leave a tincture and infection in the persons who have any thing to do with them. It is a hard thing, almost impossible, for

a man any ways to meddle with them without sin ; ordinarily they are got with sin, they are possessed with sin, they are spent with sin. A man (saith Siracides) cannot hasten to be rich without sin : and when he has once got them, how unwilling will he be to let a lust pass unsatisfied, seeing he is furnished with that to which (in his opinion at least) nothing can be denied ! How unwilling will he be to be worsted, though in the most unjust cause, seeing he is furnished with that which will blind the eyes of the prudent, and pervert the understanding of the wise ! “ For,” saith the same wise man, “ as a man’s riches, so his anger increaseth.” And upon the same grounds it may be said, that, as a man’s riches increase, so, likewise, his desires and lusts increase. I will undertake to give you one reason more, why riches are called mammon of unrighteousness ; and it is, because they are mammon, riches, indeed, only to unrighteous men : none beside such will rest contented with them, and suffer God to depart from him without a greater blessing than they can be.

20. But what need I trouble myself about inquiring after reasons why this so universally adored idol, mammon, is so dishonourably branded and stigmatised by our Saviour, since himself, in another place, has said enough of it, which may suffice, not only to warrant the reasonableness of this title, but also to make them who are apt to glory so much in riches, if they well consider it, even to envy the happiness and security of those who are not trusted with so dangerous wares. The words were spoken upon occasion of a sudden great sorrow and melancholy which appeared in a young man’s coun-

tenance, and procured by the temptations of riches, which made him refuse the most advantageous bargain that ever was offered to man. Whereupon saith Christ to his disciples (as his words are recorded by St. Matthew), "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say unto you, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."^a Indeed, St. Mark reports this speech something more largely than it is there; and, instead of a rich man, puts in, "one that trusteth in his riches^b;" which he does, not so much to explain the phrase of the speech, as to give a reason of the impossibility.

21. For if our Saviour (in saying, "It is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,") by a rich man, had meant one that trusteth in his riches, there had been no sufficient ground for so great an amazement as seized upon the disciples at the hearing of it; for that was a thing which they knew well enough before; not the most ignorant of his hearers but could have told him as much. Therefore St. Matthew's and St. Mark's words, joined together, will make up this sense (which I make no question at all but that it was Christ's meaning), namely, that it is even almost impossible for a rich man to be saved, because he cannot choose but trust in his riches.

22. And this is more clearly evinced by that satisfaction which our Saviour gave to his disciples to recover them from their astonishment; where he says,

^a Mat. xix. 23, 24.

^b Mark, x, 24.

“With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible:” intimating thus much; that, considering the great, almost irresistible, temptations which riches carry along with them, and man’s extreme weakness and natural impotency; his willing propension, and, to all ordinary natural means, most incurable inclination, to make them his place of rest, his strong city wherein he trusts; it is impossible that, these things meeting together, he should not put his confidence in them, and so make himself incapable of heaven; between which and riches thus used, there is as large, as unpassable a gulf, as between heaven and hell. “With men,” therefore, “these things are impossible, but not with God; for with him all things are possible.” It is in his power, by the help and assistance of that grace which he showers upon every one of us in baptism, to cure this hereditary weakness and sickness of our natures, and to render us healthful and vigorous, powerful enough to free ourselves from that bondage and slavery, wherein these outward worldly blessings are apt to captive us, and whereunto by nature we do willingly submit ourselves. It is in his power to make those pernicious pleasures, which riches may promise unto us, to become unwelcome and distasteful unto us: nay, which is more, it is in his power to make even this mammon of unrighteousness, against its own nature, to become an help and instrument to procure for us the true riches, even those unvaluable treasures which God hath laid up in heaven for us. Take it not ill, therefore, I beseech you, if that, for which you are so much envied and revered above other men, be so undervalued by

our Saviour in comparison with the true riches: be not angry with our Saviour for it; but rather endeavour, by trading providently with them, for your own and others' benefit, to render Christ's language in this place improper and abusive.

23. But now, if riches deserve no better a title at our Saviour's hands, how can it be likely that they can prove fit instruments to procure friends, and such friends as we stand in need of? "For do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Indeed, the argument held well on St. Paul's side, when he says, "If we have sowed to you spiritual things, is it much if we reap your temporal things?" But will the argument hold also on Christ's part: "If ye have not been faithful in the mammon of unrighteousness, who will trust you with the true riches?" Certainly: if it does not, not only this, but divers chapters besides, might, without any loss, have been left out of the Gospel.

24. And there it was a sullen ill-natured fellow, (he in the parable, I mean, which received the one talent,) and, without all question, a shameless liar (though I fear there be many who are not very averse from his opinion), who, with an impudent face, durst tell God, "He was austere, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not scattered." And though he spake this with the same confidence that his proselytes do in these our days, not as a probable opinion, but as a thing that he is assured of; ("for," says he, "I know thee, that thou art austere," &c.) yet, I beseech you, believe him not: no, no; our God is a gracious God, and requires of us no more than we are

able to do. He does not expect faith, and repentance, and good works, where he has given no abilities to perform them: nay, doth not God, by his prophet, tell us, and Christ repeats it in his parable, that he is so far from that, that after several years' labour bestowed on his vineyard, and yet no fruit issuing; yet he was content to expect one year longer, even till he had done so much that no more could be done: he is at a stay, and asks what he could have done more?

25. It were therefore very fit and convenient that we should, at least in our own hearts, silence and stifle such opinions concerning God as these are, and believe that he is a well-wisher to us, when he bestows any means upon us whereby we may do good: otherwise we shall without any comfort or courage, heartlessly, and even sleepily, go about the performing of what Christ here counsels us to. If you will not believe me upon my word, take the man's own confession. Says he, "When I had once entertained this persuasion, that God would expect a more yielding plentiful harvest, fruitful beyond that proportion of seed which he gave me to sow, I was afraid; horror and uncomfortable thoughts seized upon me, and I went and hid my talent in a napkin; I even sate still, resolved to put all to an adventure, and to expect what God would do with me; for, alas, how bootless and to no purpose would my weak endeavours be to procure the favour of such a God, that would not be content but with a great deal more than lay in my power to perform!"

26. It is true, indeed, Christ told him, that though he had had such an unworthy prejudicial conceit of him, yet

that even from thence he might have been moved to have made the best and most advantageous use of that talent which God had bestowed on him ; for, says Christ, " If thou knewest I was austere, why didst thou not, therefore, put my money into the exchanger's hands, and trade with it, that I might have received mine own with increase ? " Why didst thou not, at the least, do thy best to give satisfaction to thy hard austere master ? God forbid that I should doubt but that there are thousands who, though, it may be, they have entertained this man's opinion and conceit of God, yet make better use of it than he did. But yet the man's own confession shows what ordinarily and naturally is the fruit and issue of it.

27. That, therefore, which God sows among you, is riches ; but yet riches, most improperly so called, that which he scatters and strews abroad, is the mammon of unrighteousness. " Now, he which soweth," saith the Apostle, " soweth in hope ; " and he which scattereth, scattereth in hope. But what gain or interest, what a kind of harvest, does God hope for, after this his seed's time ? Why, just such another as the same Apostle speaks of (1 Cor. xv.), where he discourses upon the resurrection and glorious change of these our bodies : " They are sown," saith he, " in corruption, but are raised in incorruption ; they are sown in dishonour, but are raised in glory ; they are sown in weakness, but are raised in power ; they are sown natural bodies, but are raised spiritual heavenly bodies." * In like manner, God sows among you those

* 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

riches, which himself most disgracefully calls “the mammon of unrighteousness,” in hope that he may reap the true riches : he scatters among you such small trifles, that many even heathen men have been content to want, for the empty aerial reward of fame ; nay, that some of them have been content to cast away in an humour ; and these small things he scatters abroad, in hope that he may gather (what think you ?) the everlasting salvation of your souls and bodies. And is this that harsh austere master ?

28. Indeed, if God were such a person as some men have given him out for ; if he should scatter abroad his riches as snares on purpose to fetter and entangle men with them ; if he should bestow upon any this mammon of unrighteousness with an intent and resolution that it should become unto them the mammon of unrighteousness indeed, that it should make them indisposed and incapable of attaining unto the true riches ; there might be some plea for them to fasten so injurious an accusation upon God. But can the judge of all the earth deal so with his servants ? Can he, which is goodness and mercy itself, — he who rejoices to style himself the “preserver of men,” — can he be so cruelly bountiful to his creatures, as, by heaping upon them the vanishing, unsatisfying blessings of this life, thereby to fat and cherish them against the day of slaughter and destruction ? God forbid !

29. I confess, notwithstanding, that such persons there may be upon whom God may, in his wrath, shower down blessings and riches in his fierce displeasure ; but they are only such as, by living in a con-

tinual habitual practice of undervaluing and contemning the daily offers of grace and favour, have already condemned themselves, and sealed themselves unto the day of destruction. And such an one was Pharaoh; concerning whom God himself testifies, saying, "For this reason I have raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."^a That is, Since, by thy continual rebellions, thou hast judged thyself unworthy of life, for this reason I have raised thee up, I have kept thee alive, and preserved thee, that none of my former plagues should sweep thee away, that at last, by an utter destruction of thee, together with the whole strength and flower of thy kingdom, I may be glorified throughout the whole world. — But I will leave discoursing, and come nearer unto you, in the serious application of Christ's counsel here.

30. It is the property of riches (saith the Wise Man) "to gather many friends."^b Those who are above others in wealth and power shall presently be furnished with friends more than they can well know what to do withal. But such friends are not concerned at all in our Saviour's advice in my text; the friends here intended are such who are not here to restore again unto you in the same coin that they receive: "Give not to the rich," saith our Saviour, "for fear they repay you." Of all things in the world, take heed of being paid back again in this life; beware how you carry your reward along with you to your grave; but leave it to be paid in exchange in another country, where, for

^a Exod. ix. 16.

^b Prov. xix. 4.

using five talents well, you shall have ten cities given you; where, for the bounty of a cup of cold water, you shall receive a prophet's reward. Such a friend was offered once to the rich man in the Gospel. God sent him one to his doors, even to crave his friendship; but the rich man was so busied with the care of his wardrobe and his table, that he was not at leisure to hearken to so gainless an offer. Notwithstanding, the time came afterwards, when he miserably, to his cost, perceived what a blessed opportunity he had most negligently omitted; and, even in hell, attempted to purchase his favour, and to obtain from his hand a poor alms (God knows), but one drop of water. But all too late: the time of making friends was past, and a great unfordable gulf had divided them from all possible society and communion for ever.

31. Now consider, I beseech you, that it had been a very easy matter for God so to have provided for all his creatures, that each particular should have had enough of his own without being beholden to another for supply. But, then, two heavenly and divine virtues had been quite lost; for where had been the poor man's patience, and the rich man's charity? The poor man, therefore, wants, that you may have occasion to exercise your liberality; and that, by losing and diminishing your wealth upon him, ye may become more full of riches hereafter. So that it is God's great bounty to you, not only to give you plenty and abundance, but also to suffer others to languish in penury and want. It may be, God has suffered himself so long to be robbed of his own possessions, his tithes, that you might have

the glory and comfort of restoring them ; it may be, God has suffered the ancient superstitious histrionical adorning of his temples to be converted into the late slovenly profaneness, (commonly called worshipping in spirit, but intended to be worship without cost,) that you may find a happy occasion to restore those sacred places dedicated to his honour, to that majesty and reverence as may become houses wherein God delights that his name should dwell.

32. Now, if it be not in my power to persuade you neither to make God nor man your debtors by your riches, yet, I beseech you, make neither of them your enemies by them. Do not make your riches instruments of war to fight against God himself ; for example, as maintaining an unjust cause by power, a cause which God abhors. Do not so requite God for his extraordinary liberality to you, as to make his riches instruments for the devil to wreak his malice upon those whom God loveth. If I had not a care not to injure your patience too far, what might not be said upon this subject ? But I perceive it is fit for me to hasten to your release.

33. But before I quit myself, and ease you of further prosecution of this point, I shall desire you all to suffer one word of exhortation ; and if there be any here whom it may more nearly concern, I beseech them, even by the bowels of Jesus Christ, that they will suffer too a word of most necessary reproof. And though what I shall say doth not naturally flow from the words in *hand*, yet they bear a reasonable resemblance and proportion with them. So pertinent, I am sure, they are

to the auditory to whom I speak, that I would choose rather quite to lose my text, than here to leave thee unsaid.

34. It is about making friends too : indeed not with the mammon of unrighteousness ; no, that is a trifle to it. It is about making friends with not revenging injuries, with patient bearing and willing forgiving offences : a duty so seriously, so incessantly, sometimes in plain words, sometimes in parables, all manner of ways, upon all occasions, urged by our Saviour, that we cannot so much as pray, but we must be forced to acknowledge obedience to this law, "Forgive us — we forgive." Yea, so boundlessly, and without all restrictions or reservations, is it enjoined, that when Peter thought it fair to have it limited to a certain number, and proposed seven, as in his opinion reasonable and convenient ; No, saith our Saviour, forgive not until seven times, but until four hundred fourscore and ten times : and if he could have imagined that it were possible for a man to have exceeded even this number also in injuries, without question he would not have left there neither.

35. But how is the doctrine received in the world ? What counsel would men (and those none of the worst sort) give thee in such a case ? How would the soberest, discreetest, well-bred Christian advise thee ? We thus : If thy brother or thy neighbour have offered thee an injury or an affront, — forgive him ? By what means : thou art utterly undone, and lost in thy reputation with the world, if thou dost forgive him. What to be done then ? Why, let not thy heart take

let all other business and employment be laid aside, till thou hast his blood. How? A man's blood for an injurious passionate speech, for a disdainful look? Nay, that is not all: that thou mayest gain among men the reputation of a discreet well-tempered murderer, be sure thou killest him not in passion, when thy blood is hot and boiling with the provocation; but proceed with as great temper and settledness of reason, with as much discretion and preparedness, as thou wouldst to the communion. After some several days' respite, that it may appear it is thy reason guides thee, and not thy passion, invite him mildly and courteously into some retired place, and there let it be determined whether his blood or thine shall satisfy the injury.

36. Oh, thou holy Christian religion! whence is it that thy children have sucked this inhuman poisonous blood, these raging fiery spirits? For if we shall inquire of the heathen, they will say, "They have not learned this from us;" or the Mahometans, they will answer, "We are not guilty of it." Blessed God! that it should become a most sure settled course for a man to run into danger and disgrace with the world, if he shall dare to perform a commandment of Christ, which is as necessary for him to do, if he have any hopes of attaining heaven, as meat and drink is for the maintaining of life! That ever it should enter into Christian hearts to walk so curiously and exactly contrary unto the ways of God! That whereas he sees himself every day and hour almost contemned and despised by thee *who art his servant, his creature, upon whom he might without all possible imputation of unrighteousness per-*

down all the vials of his wrath and indignation, yet he, notwithstanding, is patient and long-suffering towards thee, hoping that his long-suffering may lead thee to repentance, and beseeching thee daily, by his ministers, to be reconciled unto him. And yet thou, on the other side, for a distempered passionate speech, or less, shouldst take upon thee to send thy neighbour's soul, or thine own, or likely both, clogged and oppressed with all your sins unrepented of (for how can repentance possibly consist with such a resolution?), before the tribunal seat of God, to expect your final sentence; utterly depriving thyself of all the blessed means which God has contrived for thy salvation, and putting thyself in such an estate, that it shall not be in God's power, almost, to do thee any good. Pardon, I beseech you, my earnestness, almost intemperateness, seeing it hath proceeded from so just, so warrantable a ground; and since it is in your power to give rules of honour and reputation to the whole kingdom, do not you teach others to be ashamed of this inseparable badge of your religion, charity and forgiving of offences: give men leave to be Christians without danger or dishonour; or, if religion will not work with you, yet let the laws of that state wherein you live, the earnest desires and care of your righteous Prince, prevail with you. But I have done, and proceed to my last part, which is the convenience and gain which shall accrue unto us by friends obliged with this mammon of unrighteousness, namely, by them to be "received into everlasting habitations."

37. I must here again propose another question; but when I have done that, I must be forced to leave it without an answer, unless you will be content to take a conjecture, a probability, for an answer. It is, how, or after what manner, those to whom we have done good here shall hereafter receive us into everlasting habitations? Whether this is performed only by their prayers and intercession with God in the behalf of their benefactors; or, whether they are used as instruments and conductors, as it were, as our Saviour may probably seem to intimate in the parable where the lord speaks to his servants, "That they should take away the one talent from him which had no more, and bestow it on him which had ten talents?" So uncertain it is, whether this task shall be performed by them one of these ways, or by some other unknown course, that St. Augustine ingenuously confesses, he knows not what to make of it. Yet Cardinal Bellarmine says, he can easily assoil it, and can in these words find out purgatory, and satisfaction for sin after death, and a great deal more than I can understand. But truly, if he be able to spy purgatory in this text, especially such a one as he fancies to himself in his books of that argument, he has made use of better glasses than ever Galileo found out. And I would to God those of his party would consider how much the weakness of their cause is argued even from hence, that they are forced to ground most of the points controverted between us upon such difficult places as these, of so ambiguous and *uncertain* meanings, and therefore equally obnoxious to *any man's* interpretation. . There may yet be found

out a convenient sense of this place, especially if we will allow an Hebraism in those words (which is frequent enough in the evangelical writings), of putting the third person plural to express a passive sense; and then the meaning will be, "That when, &c. they may receive you," i. e. that ye may be received "into everlasting habitations:" parallel to a like phrase in Luke, xii. 12.: "Thou fool, this night shall they take away thy soul from thee;" i. e. thy soul shall be taken from thee. And if this sense be true, as it is very likely, many of our Romish adversaries have spent much pains about this text to no purpose.

38. But to leave quarrelling: it is no very considerable matter whether we have light upon the true sense of these words or no, or whether those to whom we have done good have a share in purchasing for us an admission into these everlasting habitations, as long as we may infallibly hence conclude, that though it should fall out that "Abraham should forget us, and Israel become ignorant of us," yet certainly God (who alone is instead of ten thousand such friends), he will keep a register of all our good actions, and will take particular care of us, to give us a just proportion of reward and harvest of glory, according to our sparingness or liberality in sowing.

39. But would Almighty God have us such mercenary servants, so careful and projecting for our own advantage, that we should not obey him without a compact and bargain? Is not he worthy thy serving, unless we first make our condition with him, to be sure to gain and thrive by him? Is this a consideration worthy.

and befitting the ingenuity and nobleness of a Christian mind, “to have an eye unto the recompence of reward?” Is Christ also become a schoolmaster unto us, as well as the Law was to the Jews, that we should have need of thunder, and blackness of smoke, and voices to affright us, or promises to win and allure us? Nay, have not your ears oftentimes heard, from such places as this, an obedience of this nature disgraced and branded for a servile slavish obedience — an obedience ordinarily made the mark and badge even of a formal hypocrite, the worst kind of reprobates?

40. I confess I could show you a more excellent way than this, if men were ordinarily fitted and qualified for the receiving of it; and that is St. Paul’s “more excellent way” of charity: the keeping of God’s commandments merely out of the love of his goodness and consideration of his infinite inconceivable holiness. “And he that can receive this, let him receive it,” and thrice happy and blessed shall he be of the Lord. But, in the mean time, let him not be forward to judge his fellow-servants, if they acknowledge themselves so far guilty of weakness and imperfections that they have need to receive strength and encouragement in this their painful and laborious race “by looking forward unto the glorious prize of their high calling in Jesus Christ.”

41. Surely God is wise enough to contrive the surest course, and to set down the best and likeliest means for persuading us to his service and the obedience of his commandments. He is able to inquire and search into the most retired corners of our wicked, deceitful hearts;

and, thereby knowing our temper and disposition, he is able best to prescribe us a method and diet suitable to our constitutions. Therefore, if he, out of his infinite wisdom, and the consideration of what encouragements we stand in need of, hath thought it fit to annex to every precept, almost, a promise of happiness, or a threatening of unavoidable danger to the transgressors, what art thou, O man, that thou darest take upon thee to calumniate his proceedings, and to prescribe better directions than he has thought fit?

42. I beseech you, therefore, my beloved brethren, by all means make use of any advantages which may serve to render you more earnest, more eager, and resolute in your obedience to those holy and perfect commandments which he hath enjoined you. If you cannot find yourselves arrived as yet to that height of perfection, as that love and charity cannot wrest from you sufficient carefulness to obey him, let fear have its operation with you, fear and horror of that terrible issue which shall attend the wilful and habitual transgressors of his laws. And you need not suspect this course as unwarrantable, for you shall have St. Paul for your example, even that Paul, for whose miraculous conversion Christ was pleased, himself, in person, to descend from his throne of majesty; that Paul, who laboured in the Gospel more than all the rest of the Apostles; that Paul, whose joy and heart's comfort it was to be afflicted for the name of Christ; lastly, that Paul, who for a time was ravished from the earth to the third heaven after a most inexpressible manner, and there heard things that cannot be uttered: this Paul, I

say, shall be your example, who, after all these things, found it yet a convenient motive, and received great encouragement and eagerness to proceed in his most blessed conversation, even from this fear, "Lest, whilst he preached to others, himself should become a cast-away."

43. And when fear has done its part, let hope come in: hope of that happy communion which you shall once again have with those friends which may be purchased in this life at so easy a rate; hope of that eternal weight and burden of joy and glory which is reserved in heaven for you, if you hold fast "the rejoicing of the hope stedfast unto the end." Let a comfortable meditation of these things encourage and hearten you to proceed from one degree of holiness to another, till "we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ." And for an example in this, take that whole cloud of witnesses mustered together in Heb. xi.; or, if they will not serve the turn, take an example above all examples, an example beyond all imaginable exceptions; even our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ himself, concerning whom the author of the same epistle (it was St. Paul, sure) saith, chap. xii., that "for the joy which was set before him, he despised the shame, and endured the cross," &c.

44. God knows, we have need of all manner of encouragements, and all little enough for us, so sluggish and immovable, so perverse and obstinate are we

* Heb. iii. 6.

Therefore, for God's sake, upon any terms, continue in the service of Christ ; make use of all manner of advantages ; and though ye find hope or fear predominant in you, (these servile affections, as they are commonly called,) yet, for all that, faint not, despair not, but rather give thanks to Almighty God ; and God, who sees such good effect of his promises and threatenings in you, (of which all the Scripture is full, from one end to the other,) will, in his good time, fill your hearts full of his love, even "that perfect love which casteth out fear," and of that perfect love which shall have no need of hope : he will perfect that his good work in you unto the end.

45. To conclude all. Whether ye shall perform this commandment of Christ, or whether ye shall not perform it, it cannot be avoided ; everlasting habitations shall be your reward. Only the difference is, whether ye will have them of your enemies' providing—whether ye will be beholden to the devil and his angels, your ancient mortal enemies, to prepare everlasting dwellings for you ; ("And who can dwell in everlasting fire?" saith the prophet ; "who can dwell in continual burnings?") or whether ye will expect them from the assistance of those just persons whom you have, by your good works, eternally obliged to you, even those blessed and glorious habitations, which God the Father Almighty hath, from the beginning of the world, provided and furnished for you ; which God the Son, by his meritorious death and passion, hath purchased for you ; and for the admission whereunto, God the Holy

Ghost hath sanctified and adorned you, that in thankfulness and gratitude you yourselves may become everlasting habitations, pure and undefiled temples for him to dwell in for ever and ever. Now, unto these glorious and everlasting habitations, God of his infinite mercy bring us, even for Jesus Christ his sake: to whom, with the Father, &c.

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AGAINST FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.

[ISAAC BARROW, D.D.]

EPHES. v. 4.

Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.

MORAL and political aphorisms are seldom couched in such terms, that they should be taken as they sound precisely, or according to the widest extent of signification; but do commonly need exposition, and admit exception: otherwise, frequently, they would not only clash with reason and experience, but interfere, thwart, and supplant one another. The best masters of sound wisdom are wont to interdict things, apt by unseasonable or excessive use to be perverted, in general form of speech, leaving the restrictions, which the case may require or bear, to be made by the hearer's or interpreter's discretion: whence many seemingly formal prohibitions are to be received only as sober caution. This observation may be particularly supposed applicable to this precept of St. Paul, which seemeth universally to forbid a practice commended (in some cases and degrees) by philosophers as virtuous, not disallowed by reason, commonly affected by men, often used by wise and good persons; from which, consequent

our religion did wholly debar us, it would seem chargeable with somewhat too uncouth austerity and sourness: from imputations of which kind, as in its temper and frame it is really most free, (it never quenching natural light, or cancelling the dictates of sound reason, but confirming and improving them^a;) so it carefully declineth them, enjoining us, that “if there be any things προσφιλῇ, lovely (or grateful to men), any things εὖφημα, of good report (and repute), if there be any virtue and any praise (anything in the common apprehensions of men held worthy and laudable),” we should “mind those things^b;” that is, should yield them a regard answerable to the esteem they carry among rational and sober persons.

Whence it may seem requisite so to interpret and determine St. Paul’s meaning here concerning εὐτραπέλεια, (that is, facetious speech or raillery, by our translators rendered *jesting*;) that he may consist with himself, and be reconciled to Aristotle, who placeth this practice in the rank of virtues; or that religion and reason may well accord in the case; supposing, that if there be any kind of facetiousness innocent and reasonable, conformable to good manners, regulated by common sense, and consistent with the tenor of Christian duty, that is, not transgressing the bounds of piety, charity, and sobriety, St. Paul did not intend to discountenance or prohibit that kind.

For thus expounding and limiting his intent, we have

^a Οἱ δὲ μήτ’ αὐτοὶ ἂν εἰπόντες μηθὲν γελοῖον, τοῖς τε λέγουσι δυσχεραίνοντες, ἄγριοι καὶ σκληροὶ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι. Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

^b Phil. iv. 8.

some warrant from himself, some fair intimations in the words here. For, first, what sort of facetious speech he aimeth at, he doth imply by the fellow he coupleth therewith; *μωρολογία*, saith he, ἡ *εὐτραπεία*, “ foolish talking, or facetiousness ;” such facetiousness, therefore, he toucheth, as doth include folly, in the matter or manner thereof. Then he farther determineth it, by adjoining a peculiar quality thereof, unprofitableness or impertinency; *τὰ μὴ ἀνήκοντα*, “ which are not pertinent,” or conducive to any good purpose: whence may be collected, that it is a frivolous and idle sort of facetiousness which he condemneth.

But, however, manifest it is, that some kind thereof he doth earnestly forbid: whence, in order to the guidance of our practice, it is needful to distinguish the kinds, severing that which is allowable from that which is unlawful; that so we may be satisfied in the case, and not on the one hand ignorantly transgress our duty, nor on the other trouble ourselves with scruples, others with censures, upon the use of warrantable liberty therein.

And such a resolution seemeth, indeed, especially needful in this our age, this pleasant and jocular age, which is so infinitely addicted to this sort of speaking, that it scarce doth affect or prize any thing near so much; all reputation appearing now to veil and stoop to that of being a wit: to be learned, to be wise, to be good, are nothing in comparison thereto; even to be noble and rich are inferior things, and afford no such glory. Many, at least, to purchase this glory, to be deemed considerable in this faculty, and enrolled among

the wits, do not only “make shipwreck of conscience,” abandon virtue, and forfeit all pretences to wisdom; but neglect their estates, and prostitute their honour: so to the private damage of many particular persons, and with no small prejudice to the public, are our times possessed and transported with this humour. To repress the excess and extravagance whereof, nothing in way of discourse can serve better than a plain declaration when and how such a practice is allowable or tolerable; when it is wicked and vain, unworthy of a man endued with reason, and pretending to honesty or honour.

This I shall in some measure endeavour to perform.

But, first, it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply, as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, “It is that which we all see and know:” any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is, indeed, a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound; sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expres-

sion ; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude ; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection ; sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense ; sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it ; sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness, giveth it being ; sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange ; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose ; often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless roving of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way^b (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by), which, by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar : it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable ; a notable skill, that he can

^a “ Eadem quæ, si imprudentibus excidunt, stulta sunt, si simulamus, venusta creduntur.” *Quint.* vi. 3.

^b “ Et hercle omnis salse dicendi ratio in eo est, ut aliter quam est rectum verumque dicatur.” *Quint.*

dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him, together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. Whence in Aristotle^a such persons are termed *πρὸς ἅπαντα*, “dexterous” men; and *εὐτροποί*, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.^b It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance of difficulty: as monsters; not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure; by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts, by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit, by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance, and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual, and thence grateful tang.

But saying no more concerning what it is, and leaving it to your imagination and experience to supply the defect of such explication, I shall address myself to show, first, when and how such a manner of speaking may be allowed; then, in what matters and ways it should be condemned.

1. Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful, which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation^c: harmless, I say, that is, not entrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or

^a Eth. iv. 8.

^b *Εὐτράπελος λέγεται ὁ ποικίλος, ὁ παντοδαπὸς, ὁ ἁγαστος, ὁ εὐκολος, ὁ πάντα γινόμενος.* Chrys. in Eph. Or. 17.

^c *Δόκει δὲ ἡ ἀνάγκη καὶ ἡ παιδιὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ εἶναι ἀναγκαῖον.* Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

justice, not disturbing peace. For Christianity is not so tetrical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require.^a And if jocular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds, being tired and cloyed with graver occupations; if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good humour among us; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society, then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If, for those ends, we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion, why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies, be less reasonable than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are exercised? Yea, why are not those more reasonable, since they are performed in a manly way, and have in them a smack of reason; seeing, also, they may be so managed, as not only to divert and please, but to improve and profit the mind, rousing and quickening it, yea, sometimes enlightening and instructing it, by good sense conveyed in jocular expression?^b

It would surely be hard that we should be tied ever to knit the brow and squeeze the brain, to be always

^a “Danda est remissio animis; meliores acrioresque requieti surgent,” &c. *Sen. de Tranq.* 15.

^b *Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat?*

sadly dumpish or seriously pensive, that all divertisement of mirth and pleasantness should be shut out of conversation. And how can we better relieve our minds, or relax our thoughts, how can we be more ingenuously cheerful, in what more kindly way can we exhilarate ourselves and others, than by thus “sacrificing to the Graces^a,” as the ancients called it? Are not some persons always, and all persons sometimes, incapable otherwise to divert themselves than by such discourse? Shall we, I say, have no recreation; or must our recreations be ever clownish or childish, consisting merely in rustic efforts, or in petty sleights of bodily strength and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for every thing, and dropping grave sentences upon all occasions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish? Facetiousness, therefore, in such cases, and to such purposes, may be allowable.

2. Facetiousness is allowable, when it is the most proper instrument of exposing things apparently base and vile to due contempt. It is many times expedient, that things really ridiculous should appear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and shunned; and to render them such is the part of a facetious wit, and usually can only be compassed thereby. When to impugn them with downright reason, or to check them by serious discourse, would signify nothing; then representing them in a shape strangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raising derision at them, may effectually

^a *Θύε ταῖς χάρισι·* ita Plato Xenocratem morosiores monuit.

discountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expose the wicked superstition of those who worshipped Baal: "Elias," saith the text, "mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."^a By which one pregnant instance it appeareth, that reasoning pleasantly-abusive, in some cases, may be useful. The Holy Scripture doth not, indeed, use it frequently, it not suiting the divine simplicity and stately gravity thereof to do so; yet its condescension thereto, at any time, sufficiently doth authorise a cautious use thereof. When sarcastical twitches are needful to pierce the thick skins of men, to correct their lethargic stupidity, to rouse them out of their drowsy negligence, then may they well be applied; when plain declarations will not enlighten people, to discern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or persuade them to their duty, then doth reason freely resign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of instruction and reproof.

3. Facetious discourse particularly may be commodious for reproofing some vices and reclaiming some persons, as salt for cleansing and curing some sores. It commonly procureth a more easy access to the ears of men, and worketh a stronger impression on their hearts, than other discourse could do. Many, who will not stand a direct reproof, and cannot abide to be plainly admonished of their fault, will yet endure to be pleasantly rubbed, and will patiently bear a jocund

^a 1 Kings, xviii. 27.

wipe. Though they abominate all language purely bitter or sour, yet they can relish discourse having in it a pleasant tartness. You must not chide them as their master, but you may gibe with them as their companion : if you do that, they will take you for pragmatical and haughty ; this, they may interpret friendship and freedom. Most men are of that temper ; and particularly the genius of divers persons, whose opinions and practices we should strive to correct, doth require not a grave and severe but a free and merry way of treating them. For what can be more unsuitable and unpromising, than to seem serious with those who are not so themselves, or demure with the scornful ? If we design either to please or vex them into better manners, we must be as sportful in a manner, or as contemptuous as themselves ; if we mean to be heard by them, we must talk in their own fashion, with humour and jollity ; if we will instruct them, we must withal somewhat divert them ; we must seem to play with them, if we think to convey any sober thoughts into them. They scorn to be formally advised or taught ; but they may, perhaps, be slyly laughed and lured into a better mind. If by such complaisance we can inveigle those dotterels to hearken to us, we may induce them to consider farther, and give reason some competent scope, some fair play with them. Good reason may be apparelled in the garb of wit, and therein will securely pass, whither in its native homeliness it could never arrive : and being come thither, it with especial advantage may impress good advice ; making an offender more clearly to see, and more deeply to feel, his miscarriage ; being

represented to his fancy in a strain somewhat rare and remarkable, yet not so fierce and frightful. The severity of reproof is tempered, and the reprover's anger disguised thereby. The guilty person cannot but observe, that he who thus reprehends him is not disturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no small efficacy to his wholesome suggestions. Such a reprehension, while it forceth a smile without, doth work remorse within; while it seemeth to tickle the ear, doth sting the heart. In fine, many whose foreheads are brazed, and hearts steeled, against all blame, are yet not of proof against derision; divers, who never will be reasoned, may be rallied into better order: in which cases raillery, as an instrument of so important good, as a servant of the best charity, may be allowed.

4. Some errors likewise, in this way, may be most properly and most successfully confuted; such as deserve not, and hardly can bear a serious and solid confutation. He that will contest things apparently decided by sense and experience, or who disavows clear principles of reason, approved by general consent and the common sense of men, what other hopeful way is there of proceeding with him, than pleasantly to explode his conceits? To dispute seriously with him were trifling; to trifle with him is the proper course: since he rejecteth the grounds of reasoning, it is vain to be in earnest: what then remains but to jest with him? To deal seriously, were to yield too much respect to such a *baffler*, and too much weight to his fancies; to

raise the man too high in his courage and conceit; to make his pretences seem worthy the considering and canvassing. Briefly, perverse obstinacy is more easily quelled, petulant impudence is sooner dashed, sophistical captiousness is more safely eluded, sceptical wantonness is more surely confounded, in this, than in the simple way of discourse.

5. This way is also commonly the best way of defence against unjust reproach and obloquy. To yield to a slanderous reviler a serious reply, or to make a formal plea against his charge, doth seem to imply, that we much consider or deeply resent it; whereas by pleasant reflection on it we signify, the matter only deserves contempt, and that we take ourselves unconcerned therein. So easily, without care or trouble, may the brunts of malice be declined or repelled.

6. This way may be allowed in way of counterbalancing and in compliance to the fashion of others. It would be a disadvantage unto truth and virtue, if their defenders were barred from the use of this weapon; since it is that especially whereby the patrons of error and vice do maintain and propagate them. They, being destitute of good reason, do usually recommend their absurd and pestilent notions by a pleasantness of conceit and expression, bewitching the fancies of shallow hearers, and inveigling heedless persons to a liking of them: and if, for reclaiming such people, the folly of those seducers may in like manner be displayed as ridiculous and odious, why should that advantage be refused? It is wit that wagemeth the war against reason, against virtue, against religion; wit alone it is that

perverteth so many, and so greatly corrupteth the world: it may therefore be needful, in our warfare for those dearest concerns, to sort the manner of our fighting with that of our adversaries, and with the same kind of arms to protect goodness, whereby they do assail it. If wit may happily serve under the banner of truth and virtue, we may impress it for that service; and good it were to rescue so worthy a faculty from so vile abuse. It is the right of reason and piety to command that and all other endowments; folly and impiety do only usurp them: just and fit therefore it is, to wrest them out of so bad hands, to revoke them to their right use and duty.

It doth especially seem requisite to do it in this age, wherein plain reason is deemed a dull and heavy thing. When the mental appetite of men is become like the corporeal, and cannot relish any food without some piquant sauce; so that people will rather starve than live on solid fare; when substantial and sound discourse findeth small attention or acceptance; in such a time, he that can, may in complaisance, and for fashion's sake, vouchsafe to be facetious. An ingenious vein coupled with an honest mind may be a good talent: he shall employ wit commendably, who by it can further the interests of goodness; alluring men first to listen, then inducing them to consent unto its wholesome dictates and precepts.

Since men are so irreclaimably disposed to mirth and laughter, it may be well to set them in the right pin, to divert their humour into the proper channel, that *they may please themselves in deriding things which*

deserve it, ceasing to laugh at that which requireth reverence or horror.

It may also be expedient to put the world out of conceit, that all sober and good men are a sort of such lumpish or sour people, that they can utter nothing but flat and drowsy stuff; by showing them, that such persons, when they see cause, in condescension, can be as brisk and smart as themselves; when they please, can speak pleasantly and wittily, as well as gravely and judiciously. This way at least, in respect to the various palates of men, may for variety sake be sometimes attempted, when other means do fail. When many strict and subtile arguings, many zealous declamations, many wholesome serious discourses, have been spent, without effecting the extirpation of bad principles, or conversion of those who abet them; this course may be tried, and some perhaps may be reclaimed thereby.

7. Furthermore, the warrantableness of this practice in some cases may be inferred from a parity of reason, in this manner: If it be lawful (as by the best authorities it plainly doth appear to be), in using rhetorical schemes, poetical strains, involutions of sense, in allegories, fables, parables, and riddles, to discoast from the plain and simple way of speech; why may not facetiousness, issuing from the same principles, directed to the same ends, serving to like purposes, be likewise used blamelessly? If those exorbitancies of speech may be accommodated to instil good doctrine into the head, to excite good passions in the heart, to illustrate and adorn the truth, in a delightful and taking way; and facetious discourse be sometime notoriously con-

ducible to the same ends; why, they being retained, should it be rejected? especially considering how difficult often it may be, to distinguish those forms of discourse from this, or exactly to define the limits which sever rhetoric and raillery. Some elegant figures and tropes of rhetoric (biting sarcasms, sly ironies, strong metaphors, lofty hyperboles, paronomasies, oxymorons, and the like, frequently used by the best speakers, and not seldom even by sacred writers) do lie very near upon the confines of jocularità, and are not easily differenced from those sallies of wit, wherein the lepid way doth consist: so that were this wholly culpable, it would be matter of scruple, whether one hath committed a fault or no, when he meant only to play the orator or the poet; and hard, surely, it would be to find a judge, who could precisely set out the difference between a jest and a flourish.

8. I shall only add, that of old even the sagest and gravest persons (persons of most rigid and severe virtue) did much affect this kind of discourse, and did apply it to noble purposes. The great introducer of moral wisdom among the Pagans did practise it so much (by it repressing the windy pride and fallacious vanity of sophisters in his time), that he thereby got the name of *ὁ εἰρων*, the droll: and the rest of those who pursued his design, do by numberless stories and apophthegms recorded of them appear well skilled and much delighted in this way. Many great princes, (as Augustus Cæsar for one, many of whose jests are extant in Macrobius,) many grave statesmen, (as Cicero^a parti-

^a Cic. de Orat. ii.

cularly, who composed several books of jests,) many famous captains, (as Fabius, M. Cato the censor, Scipio Africanus, Epaminondas, Themistocles, Phocion, and many others, whose witty sayings together with their martial exploits are reported by historians,) have pleased themselves herein, and made it a condiment of their weighty businesses. So that practising thus, within certain rule and compass, we cannot err without great patterns and mighty patrons.^a

9. In fine, since it cannot be shown that such a sportfulness of wit and fancy doth contain an intrinsic and inseparable turpitude; since it may be so cleanly, handsomely, and innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of the speaker, not to wrong or harm the hearer, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the grand duties incumbent on us, (piety, charity, justice, sobriety,) but rather sometimes may yield advantage in those respects^b; it cannot well absolutely and universally be condemned: and when not used upon improper matter, in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, to evil purpose, it may be allowed. It is bad objects, or bad adjuncts, which do spoil its indifference and innocence^c: it is the abuse thereof, to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth

^a The two greatest men and gravest divines of their time (S. Greg. Naz. and S. Basil) could entertain one another with facetious epistles. Greg. Naz. ep. vii. ad Basil. *Σὺ σκῶπτε καὶ διδάσκειτε*, &c. Et ep. viii.

^b *Τὸ γελᾶν, καὶ ἀστεῖα λέγειν, οὐ δοκεῖ μὲν ὁμολογημένον ἀμάρτημα εἶναι, ἀγχι δὲ, &c.* Chrys. Ἄνδρ. ε'.

^c *Ὁ εὐτραπελευόμενος κατήγορος ἔσται ταχέως.* Chrys.

it; and seemeth to be the ground, why in so general terms it is prohibited by the Apostle. Which prohibition, to what cases or what sorts of jesting it extendeth, we come now to declare.

II. 1. All profane jesting, all speaking loosely and wantonly about holy things (things nearly related to God and religion), making such things the matters of sport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited, as an intolerably vain and wicked practice. It is an infallible sign of a vain and light spirit, which considereth little, and cannot distinguish things, to talk slightly concerning persons of high dignity, to whom especial respect is due; or about matters of great importance, which deserve very serious consideration., No man speaketh, or should speak, of his prince that which he hath not weighed, whether it will consist with that veneration which should be preserved inviolate to him: and is not the same, is not much greater care to be used in regard to the incomparably great and glorious Majesty of heaven? Yes, surely: as we should not without great awe think of him; so we should not presume to mention his name, his word, his institutions, any thing immediately belonging to him, without profoundest reverence and dread. It is the most enormous sauciness that can be imagined, to speak petulantly or pertly concerning him; especially considering, that whatever we do say about him, we do utter it in his presence, and to his very face. “For there is not,” as the holy Psalmist considered, “a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord,

thou knowest it altogether.”^a No man also hath the heart to droll, or thinks raillery convenient, in cases nearly touching his life, his health, his estate, or his fame: and are the true life and health of our soul, are interest in God’s favour and mercy, are everlasting glory and bliss, affairs of less moment? Are the treasures and joys of paradise, or the damages and torments in hell, more jesting matters? No, certainly, no: in all reason, therefore, it becometh us, and it infinitely concerneth us, whenever we think of these things, to be in best earnest, always to speak of them in most sober sadness.

The proper objects of common mirth and sportful divertisement are mean and petty matters; any thing at least is by playing therewith made such: great things are thereby diminished and debased; especially sacred things do grievously suffer thence, being with extreme indecency and indignity depressed beneath themselves, when they become the subjects of flashy wit, or the entertainments of frothy merriment: to sacrifice their honour to our vain pleasure, being like the ridiculous fondness of that people, which, as *Ælian* reporteth, worshipping a fly, did offer up an ox thereto. These things were by God instituted, and proposed to us for purposes quite different; to compose our hearts, and settle our fancies in a most serious frame; to breed inward satisfaction, and joy purely spiritual; to exercise our most solemn thoughts, and employ our gravest discourses: all our speech therefore about them should be “wholesome^b,” apt to afford good

^a Psalm cxxxix. 4.

^b Tit. ii. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 3.

instruction, or to excite good affections ; “ good,” as St. Paul speaketh, “ for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”^a

If we must be facetious and merry, the field is wide and spacious ; there are matters enough in the world beside these most august and dreadful things, to try our faculties, and please our humour with : every where light and ludicrous things occur : it therefore doth argue a marvellous poverty of wit, and barrenness of invention, no less than a strange defect of goodness, and want of discretion, in those who can devise no other subjects to frolic upon beside these, of all most improper and perilous ; who cannot seem ingenious under the charge of so highly trespassing upon decency, disclaiming wisdom, wounding the ears of others, and their own consciences. Seem ingenious, I say ; for seldom those persons really are such, or are capable to discover any wit in a wise and manly way. It is not the excellency of their fancies (which in themselves usually are sorry and insipid enough), but the uncouthness of their presumption ; not their extraordinary wit, but their prodigious rashness, which is to be admired. They are gazed on as the doers of bold tricks, who dare perform that which no sober man will attempt : they do indeed rather deserve themselves to be laughed at, than their conceits. For what can be more ridiculous than we do make ourselves, when we thus fiddle and fool with our own souls ; when, to make vain people merry, we incense God’s earnest displeasure ; when, to raise a fit of present laughter, we expose ourselves to

^a Eph. iv. 29.

endless wailing and woe; when, to be reckoned wits, we prove ourselves stark wild? Surely to this case we may accommodate that of a truly great wit, King Solomon: "I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?"^a

2. All injurious, abusive, scurrilous jesting, which causelessly or needlessly tendeth to the disgrace, damage, vexation, or prejudice, in any kind, of our neighbour, (provoking his displeasure, grating on his modesty, stirring passion in him,) is also prohibited. When men^b, to raise an admiration of their wit, to please themselves, or gratify the humour of other men, do expose their neighbour to scorn and contempt, making ignominious reflections upon his person or his actions, taunting his real imperfections, or fastening imaginary ones upon him, they transgress their duty, and abuse their wits; it is not urbanity, or genuine facetiousness, but uncivil rudeness, or vile malignity. To do thus^c, as it is the office of mean and base spirits, unfit for any worthy or weighty employments, so it is full of inhumanity, of iniquity, of indecency and folly. For the weaknesses of men, of what kind soever, (natural or moral, in quality or in act,) considering whence they spring, and how much we are all subject to them, and do need excuse for them, do in equity challenge compassion to be had of them; not complacency to be taken in them, or mirth drawn from them; they, in

^a Eccles. ii. 2.

^b

———— " Solutos

Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis,
Hic niger est."

Hor. Sat. i. 4. 82.

^c 'Ο δὲ βωμολόχος, ἡττων ἐστὶ τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ οὔτε ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεχόμενος, εἰ γέλωτα ποιήσει. Arist. Eth. iv. 8.

respect to common humanity, should rather be studiously connived at and concealed, or mildly excused, than wilfully laid open, and wantonly descanted upon; they rather are to be deplored secretly, than openly derided.

The reputation of men is too noble a sacrifice to be offered up to vain glory, fond pleasure, or ill humour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be prostituted for idle sport and divertisement. It becometh us not to trifle with that, which in common estimation is of so great moment; to play rudely with a thing so very brittle^a, yet of so vast price; which, being once broken or cracked, it is very hard, and scarce possible, to repair. A small transient pleasure, a tickling the ears, wagging the lungs, forming the face into a smile, a giggle, or a hum, are not to be purchased with the grievous distaste and smart, perhaps with the real damage and mischief, of our neighbour, which attend upon contempt.^b This is not jesting, surely, but bad earnest: it is wild mirth, which is the mother of grief to those whom we should tenderly love; it is unnatural sport, which breedeth displeasure in them whose delight it should promote, whose liking it should procure: it crosseth the nature and design of this way of speaking; which is to cement and ingratiate society, to render conversation pleasant and sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort.

^a " Vitrea fama." *Hor. Sat.ii. 3. 222.*

^b *Prov. xxvi. 18, 19.*: " As a madman, who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?"

Οἱ ἐνεδρεύοντες τοὺς ἑαυτῶν φίλους. — LXX.

True festivity is called salt; and such it should be, giving a smart but savoury relish to discourse; exciting an appetite, not irritating disgust; cleansing sometime, but never creating a sore: and, *ἐὰν μωρανθῇ*, “if it become thus insipid, or unsavoury, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.”^a Such jesting which doth not season wholesome or harmless discourse, but giveth a haut-gout to putrid and poisonous stuff, gratifying distempered palates and corrupt stomachs, is indeed odious and despicable folly, “to be cast out” with loathing, “to be trodden under foot” with contempt. If a man offends in this sort to please himself, it is scurvy malignity; if to delight others, it is base servility and flattery: upon the first score he is a buffoon to himself; upon the last, a fool to others.^b And well in common speech are such practisers so termed, the grounds of that practice being so vain, and the effect so unhappy. “The heart of fools, saith the Wise Man, is in the house of mirth^c;” meaning, it seems, especially such hurtfully wanton mirth: for it is, as he farther tells us, the property of fools to delight in doing harm: “It is as sport to a fool to do mischief.”^d Is it not^e in earnest

^a Matt. v. 13. “Nimium risus pretium est, si probitatis impendio constat.” *Quint.*

^b *Εἰ καλὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα, τί τοῖς μίμοις ἀφίεται; μῖμος γίνη; καὶ οὐκ αἰσχύνη.* *Chrys.*

^c Eccles. vii. 4.

^d Prov. x. 23.

^e “Fools make a mock at sin.” Prov. xiv. 9.

“Potius amicum quam dictum perdidit.”

——— “dummodo risum

Excutiat sibi, non hic cuiquam parcat amico.”

Hor. Sat. i. 4. 34.

“Dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetiis irridere solitus, quæ apud præpotentes in longum memoria est.” *Tac. v. Ann. p. 184.*

most palpable folly for so mean ends to do so great harm; to disoblige men in sport; to lose friends and get enemies for a conceit; out of a light humour to provoke fierce wrath, and breed tough hatred; to engage oneself consequently very far in strife, danger, and trouble? No way, certainly, is more apt to produce such effects than this; nothing more speedily inflameth, or more thoroughly engageth men, or sticketh longer in men's hearts and memories, than bitter taunts and scoffs: whence this honey soon turns into gall; these jolly comedies do commonly terminate in woful tragedies.

Especially this scurrilous and scoffing way is then most detestable, when it not only exposeth the blemishes and infirmities of men, but abuseth piety and virtue themselves; flouting persons for their constancy in devotion, or their strict adherence to a conscientious practice of duty; aiming to effect that which Job complaineth of: "The just upright man is laughed to scorn^a;" resembling those whom the Psalmist thus describeth: "Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect^b;" serving good men as Jeremy was served: "The word of the Lord," saith he, "was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily."^c

This practice doth evidently, in the highest degree, tend to the disparagement and discouragement of goodness; aiming to expose it, and to render men ashamed thereof; and it manifestly proceedeth from a desperate corruption of mind, from a mind hardened and em-

^a *Job, xii. 4.*

^b *Psalm lxiv. 3, 4.*

^c *Jer. xx. 8.*

boldened, sold and enslaved to wickedness; whence they who deal therein are in Holy Scripture represented as egregious sinners, or persons superlatively wicked, under the name of scorers; (*λοιμοὺς*, pests, or pestilent men, the Greek translators call them, properly enough, in regard to the effects of their practice;) concerning whom the Wise Man, signifying how God will meet with them in their own way, saith, “Surely the Lord scorneth the scorers.”^a *Ἐμπαίκτας*, “scoffers” (or mockers), St. Peter termeth them, “who walk according to their own lusts^b ;” who, not being willing to practise, are ready to deride, virtue; thereby striving to seduce others into their pernicious courses.

This offence also proportionably groweth more criminal as it presumeth to reach persons eminent in dignity or worth, unto whom special veneration is appropriate. This adjoineth sauciness to scurrility, and advanceth the wrong thereof into a kind of sacrilege. It is not only injustice, but profaneness, to “abuse the gods.”^c Their station is a sanctuary from all irreverence and reproach; they are seated on high, that we may only look up to them with respect: their defects are not to be seen, or not to be touched by malicious or wanton wits, by spiteful or scornful tongues: the diminution of their credit is a public mischief, and the state itself doth suffer in their becoming objects of scorn; not only themselves are vilified and degraded, but the great

^a Prov. iii. 34.

^b 2 Pet. iii. 3.

^c Exod. xxii. 28. Πόρρω δὲ τοῦτο Χριστιανοῦ, τὸ κωμωδεῖν. Chrys. in Eph. Or. 17.

Γλῶσσαν ἔχεις, οὐχ ἵνα ἕτερον κωμωδήσῃς, ἀλλ' ἵνα εὐχαριστήσῃς τῷ θεῷ. Idem.

affairs they manage are obstructed, the justice they administer is disparaged thereby.

In fine, no jesting is allowable which is not thoroughly innocent: it is an unworthy perverting of wit to employ it in biting and scratching; in working prejudice to any man's reputation or interest; in needlessly incensing any man's anger or sorrow; in raising animosities, dissensions, and feuds among any.

Whence it is somewhat strange that any men from so mean and silly a practice should expect commendation, or that any should afford regard thereto; the which it is so far from meriting, that, indeed, contempt and abhorrence are due to it. Men do truly more render themselves despicable than others, when, without just ground, or reasonable occasion, they do attack others in this way. That such a practice doth ever find any encouragement or acceptance, whence can it proceed but from the bad nature and small judgment of some persons? For to any man who is endued with any sense of goodness, and hath a competence of true wit, or a right knowledge of good manners (who knows *inurbanum lepido seponere dicto*)^a, it cannot but be unsavoury and loathsome. The repute it obtaineth is in all respects unjust. So would it appear, not only were the cause to be decided in the court of morality, because it consists not with virtue and wisdom, but even before any competent judges of wit itself. For he overthrows his own pretence, and cannot reasonably claim any interest in wit, who doth thus behave himself; he prejudgeth himself to want wit, who cannot

^a .Hor. A. P. 273.

descry fit matter to divert himself or others ; he discovereth a great straitness and sterility of good invention, who cannot in all the wide field of things find better subjects of discourse ; who knows not how to be ingenious within reasonable compass, but, to pick up a sorry conceit, is forced to make excursions beyond the bounds of honesty and decency.

Neither is it any argument of considerable ability in him that haps to please this way ; a slender faculty will serve the turn. The sharpness of his speech cometh not from wit so much as from choler, which furnisheth the lowest inventions with a kind of pungent expression, and giveth an edge to every spiteful word^a ; so that any dull wretch doth seem to scold eloquently and ingeniously. Commonly, also, satirical taunts do owe their seeming piquancy, not to the speaker or his words, but to the subject and the hearers, the matter conspiring with the bad nature or the vanity of men, who love to laugh at any rate, and to be pleased at the expense of other men's repute, conceiting themselves extolled by the depression of their neighbour, and hoping to gain by his loss. Such customers they are that maintain the bitter wits, who otherwise would want trade, and might go a-begging. For, commonly, they who seem to excel this way are miserably flat in other discourse, and most dully serious ; they have a particular unaptness to describe any good thing, or commend any worthy person, being destitute of right ideas and proper terms answerable to such purposes ; their repre-

^a "Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur : quippe adulationi fœdum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest." *Tac. Hist. i. init.*

sentations of that kind are absurd and unhandsome ; their eulogies (to use their own way of speaking) are in effect satires, and they can hardly more abuse a man than by attempting to commend him ; like those in the Prophet, who were “ wise to do ill, but to do well had no knowledge.”^a

3. I pass by that it is very culpable to be facetious in obscene and smutty matters. Such things are not to be discoursed on either in jest or in earnest ; they must not, as St. Paul saith, be “ so much as named among Christians^b ;” to meddle with them is not to disport but to defile oneself and others. There is, indeed, no more certain sign of a mind utterly debauched from piety and virtue than affecting such talk. But, farther,

4. All unseasonable jesting is blameable. As there are some proper seasons of relaxation, when we may *desipere in loco*, so are there some times and circumstances of things wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be serious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in discourse, when to sport in this way is to do indecently, or uncivilly, to be impertinent or troublesome.^c

It comporteth not well with the presence of superiors, before whom it becometh us to be composed and modest, much less with the performance of sacred offices, which require an earnest attention, and most serious frame of mind.

^a Jer. iv. 22.

^b Eph. v. 3.

^c “ Vitandum ne petulans, ne superbum, ne loco, ne tempori alienum, ne præparatum et domo allatum videatur.” Quint.

In deliberations and debates about affairs of great importance, the simple manner of speaking to the point is the proper, easy, clear, and compendious way; facetious speech there serves only to obstruct and entangle business, to lose time, and protract the result.^a The shop and exchange will scarce endure jesting in their lower transactions; the senate, the court of justice, the church do much more exclude it from their more weighty consultations. Whenever it justleth out or hindereth the despatch of other serious business, taking up the room or swallowing the time due to it, or indisposing the minds of the audience to attend it, then it is unseasonable and pestilent. Παίζειν, ἵνα σπουδάξῃς^b, to play, that we may be seriously busy, is the good rule of Anacharsis; implying the subordination of sport to business, as a condiment and furtherance, not an impediment or clog thereto. He that for his sport neglects his business, deserves indeed to be reckoned among children; and children's fortune will attend him, to be pleased with toys, and to fail of substantial profit.

It is, again, improper (because, indeed, uncivil and inhuman) to jest with persons that are in a sad or afflicted condition^c, as arguing want of due considering or due commiserating their case; it appears a kind of insulting upon their misfortune, and is apt to foment their grief. Even in our own case, upon any disastrous occurrence to ourselves, it would not be seemly to frolic it thus; it would signify want of due regard to the

^a Μή μοι τὰ κόμπῃ, ἀλλ' ὧν πόλει δεῖ. Eurip. Arist. Pol. ii. 4.

^b Arist. Eth. x. 6.

^c "Adversus miseros inhumanus est jocus." Quint.

frowns of God, and the strokes of his hand ; it would cross the wise man's advice : " In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider." ^a

It is also not seasonable, or civil, to be jocund in this way with those who desire to be serious, and like not the humour. Jocularities should not be forcibly obtruded, but, by a kindly conspiracy, or tacit compact, slip into conversation ; consent and complaisance give all the life thereto. Its design is to sweeten and ease society ; when, to the contrary, it breedeth offence or incumbrance, it is worse than vain and unprofitable. From these instances we may collect when in other like cases it is unseasonable, and therefore culpable. Further —

5. To affect, admire, or highly to value this way of speaking, either absolutely in itself, or in comparison to the serious and plain way of speech, and thence to be drawn into an immoderate use thereof, is blameable. A man of ripe age and sound judgment, for refreshment to himself, or in complaisance to others, may sometimes condescend to play in this or in any other harmless way ; but to be fond of it, to prosecute it with a careful or painful eagerness, to doat and dwell upon it, to reckon it a brave or a fine thing, a singular matter of commendation, a transcendent accomplishment, anywise preferable to rational endowments, or comparable to the moral excellencies of our mind, (to solid knowledge, or sound wisdom, or true virtue and goodness), this is extremely childish or brutish, and far below a man. What can be more absurd than to make a business of

^a Eccles. vii. 14.

play, to be studious and laborious in toys, to make a profession or drive a trade of impertinency?^a What more plain nonsense can there be than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertisement, or constant in pastime, to make extravagance all our way, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever busy, yet never hath anything to do? or the life of that mimical brute which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks, which, could it speak, might surely pass well for a professed wit?

The proper work of man, the grand drift of human life is to follow reason, that noble spark kindled in us from heaven; that princely and powerful faculty which is able to reach so lofty objects, and to achieve so mighty works; not to sooth fancy, that brutish, shallow, and giddy power, able to perform nothing worthy much regard. "We are not," even Cicero could tell us, "born for play and jesting, but for severity, and the study of graver and greater affairs."^b Yes, we were purposely designed, and fitly framed, to understand and contemplate, to affect and delight in, to undertake and pursue, most noble and worthy things; to be employed in business considerably profitable to ourselves, and beneficial to others: we do therefore strangely debase ourselves when we do strongly bend our minds to, or set our affections upon, such toys.

Especially to do so is unworthy of a Christian, that

^a Σπουδάζειν καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἡλίθιον φαίνεται, καὶ λίαν παιδικόν. Arist. Eth. x. 6.

^b "Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum jocumque facti videamur; sed ad severitatem potius, et ad quædam studia graviora atque majora." Cic. Off. i.

is, of a person who is advanced to so high a rank and so glorious relations, who hath so excellent objects of his mind and affections presented before him, and so excellent rewards for his care and pains proposed to him, who is engaged in affairs of so worthy nature, and so immense consequence; for him to be zealous about quibbles, for him to be ravished with puny conceits and expressions, it is a wondrous oversight, and an enormous indecency.

He, indeed, that prefers any faculty to reason, disclaims the privilege of being a man, and understands not the worth of his own nature; he that prizes any quality beyond virtue and goodness, renounces the title of a Christian, and knows not how to value the dignity of his profession. It is these two, reason and virtue, in conjunction, which produce all that is considerably good and great in the world. Fancy can do little, doth never any thing well, except as directed and wielded by them. Do pretty conceits or humorous talk carry on any business or perform any work? No; they are ineffectual and fruitless: often they disturb, but they never despatch any thing with good success. It is simple reason, as dull and dry as it seemeth, which expediteth all the grand affairs, which accomplisheth all the mighty works, that we see done in the world.. In truth, therefore, as one diamond is worth numberless bits of glass, so one solid reason is worth innumerable fancies; one grain of true science and sound wisdom in real worth and use doth outweigh loads, if any loads can be, of freakish wit. To rate things otherwise doth argue great weakness of judgment and fondness of

mind. So to conceit of this way signifieth a weak mind; and much to delight therein rendereth it so: nothing more debaseth the spirit of a man or more rendereth it light and trifling.*

Hence, if we must be venting pleasant conceits, we should do it as if we did it not, carelessly and unconcernedly; not standing upon it, or valuing ourselves for it; we should do it with measure and moderation; not giving up ourselves thereto so as to mind it, or delight in it more than in any other thing; we should not be so intent upon it as to become remiss in affairs more proper or needful for us, so as to nauseate serious business, or disrelish the more worthy entertainments of our minds. This is the great danger of it which we daily see men to incur; they are so bewitched with a humour of being witty themselves, or of hearkening to the fancies of others, that it is this only which they can like or favour, which they can endure to think or talk of. It is a great pity that men who would seem to have so much wit should so little understand themselves. But, farther,—

6. Vain-glorious ostentation this way is very blameable. All ambition, all vanity, all conceitedness, upon whatever ground they are founded, are absolutely unreasonable and silly; but yet those, being grounded on

* Ὡς μὴ συμβαίνειν κατὰ ταυτὴν ψυχῆς νῆψιν, καὶ εὐτραπείας διάχυσιν. Bas. Const. Mon. 12.

Πολλοὺς συμβαίνει τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀσχολουμένους, τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου διαμαρτάνειν, τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς γελοῖα μὲν διαχεομένης, καὶ τὸ τῆς φρονήσεως σύννοον καὶ πεπυκνωμένον καταλυουσης. Ibid.

“Jocorum frequens usus omne animis pondus, omnemque vim eripiet.” Sen. de Tranq. c. xv.

Ἡ εὐτραπεία μαλακὴν ποιεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, ῥαθυμὸν, ἀναπεπτωκυῖαν. Chrys. in Eph. 17.

some real ability, or some useful skill, are wise and manly in comparison to this, which standeth on a foundation so manifestly slight and weak. The old philosophers, by a severe father^a, were called *animalia gloriæ*, animals of glory; and by a satirical poet they were termed “bladders of vanity^b :” but they at least did catch at praise from praiseworthy knowledge; they were puffed up with a wind which blowed some good to mankind; they sought glory from that which deserved glory, if they had not sought it; it was a substantial and solid credit which they did affect, resulting from successful enterprises of strong reason and stout industry: but these *animalcula gloriæ*^c, these flies, these insects of glory, these, not bladders, but bubbles of vanity, would be admired and praised for that which is nowise admirable or laudable; for the casual hits and emergencies of roving fancy; for stumbling on an odd conceit or phrase, which signifieth nothing, and is as superficial as the smile, as hollow as the noise it causeth. Nothing certainly in nature is more ridiculous than a self-conceited wit, who deemeth himself somebody, and greatly pretendeth to commendation from so pitiful and worthless a thing as a knack of trifling.

7. Lastly, it is our duty never so far to engage ourselves in this way, as thereby to lose or to impair that habitual seriousness, modesty, and sobriety of mind, that steady composedness, gravity, and constancy of demeanour, which become Christians. We should continually keep our minds intent upon our high calling and

^a Tertull.

^b Κενῆς οἰήσιος ἔμπλεοι ἄσκοι. Timon.

^c “Risus — tenuissimus ingenii fructus.” Cic. de Orat. ii.

grand interests, ever well tuned and ready for the performance of holy devotions, and the practice of most serious duties, with earnest attention and fervent affection; wherefore we should never suffer them to be dissolved into levity, or disordered into a wanton frame, indisposing us for religious thoughts and actions. We ought always, in our behaviour, to maintain not only τὸ πρέπον^a, a fitting decency, but also τὸ σεμνὸν^b, a stately gravity, a kind of venerable majesty, suitable to that high rank which we bear, of God's friends and children; adorning our holy profession^c, and guarding us from all impressions of sinful vanity. Wherefore we should not let ourselves be transported into any excessive pitch of lightness, inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, our Christian state and business. Gravity and modesty are the fences of piety, which being once slighted, sin will easily attempt and encroach upon us. So the old Spanish gentleman may be interpreted to have been wise, who, when his son upon a voyage to the Indies took his leave of him, gave him this odd advice: "My son, in the first place, keep thy gravity; in the next place, fear God^d:" intimating, that a man must first be serious, before he can be pious.

To conclude: as we need not be demure, so must we not be impudent; as we should not be sour, so ought we not to be fond; as we may be free, so we should not be vain; as we may well stoop to friendly complaisance, so we should take heed of falling into contemptible levity.

^a Phil. iv. 8.

^b 1 Tim. iii. 8.

^c Tit. ii. 10. "Dictum potius aliquando perdet, quam minuet auctoritatem." Quint. vi. 3.

^d Strad. Infam. Famiani.

If, without wronging others, or derogating from ourselves, we can be facetious, if we can use our wits in jesting innocently and conveniently, we may sometimes do it ; but let us, in compliance with St. Paul's direction, beware of " foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient."

" Now the God of grace and peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever." ^a Amen.

^a Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

THE WAYS OF WISDOM ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS.

[ROBERT SOUTH, D.D.]

PROV. iii. 17.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness.

THE text, relating to something going before, must carry our eye back to the 13th verse, where we shall find that the thing of which these words are affirmed is wisdom; a name by which the Spirit of God was here pleased to express to us religion, and thereby to tell the world, what before it was not aware of, and perhaps will not yet believe, that those two great things that so engross the desires and designs of both the nobler and ignobler sort of mankind, are to be found in religion; namely, wisdom and pleasure; and that the former is the direct way to the latter, as religion is to both.

That pleasure is man's chiefest good, (because, indeed, it is the perception of good that is properly pleasure,) is an assertion most certainly true, though, under the common acceptance of it, not only false, but odious; for, according to this, pleasure and sensuality pass for terms equivalent; and therefore, he that takes it in this sense, alters the subject of the discourse. Sensuality is,

indeed, a part, or rather one kind, of pleasure, such an one as it is : for pleasure, in general, is the consequent apprehension of a suitable object, suitably applied to a rightly disposed faculty ; and so must be conversant, both about the faculties of the body, and of the soul respectively, as being the result of the fruitions belonging to both.

Now, amongst those many arguments used to press upon men the true exercise of religion, I know none that are like to be so successful as those that answer and remove the prejudices that generally possess and bar up the hearts of men against it ; amongst which there is none so prevalent in truth, though so little owned in pretence, as that it is an enemy to men's pleasures, that it bereaves them of all the sweets of converse, dooms them to an absurd and perpetual melancholy, designing to make the world nothing else but a great monastery. With which notion of religion, nature and reason seem to have great cause to be dissatisfied. For since God never created any faculty, either in soul or body, but withal prepared for it a suitable object, and that in order to its gratification ; can we think that religion was designed only for a contradiction to nature, and, with the greatest and most irrational tyranny in the world, to tantalise and tie men up from enjoyment, in the midst of all the opportunities of enjoyment ; to place men with the furious affections of hunger and thirst in the very bosom of plenty ; and then to tell them that the envy of Providence has sealed up every thing that is suitable under the character of *unlawful* ? For, certainly, first to frame appe-

tites fit to receive pleasure, and then to interdict them with a "Touch not, taste not," can be nothing else than only to give them occasion to devour and prey upon themselves; and so to keep men under the perpetual torment of an unsatisfied desire; a thing hugely contrary to the natural felicity of the creature, and consequently to the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator.

He, therefore, that would persuade men to religion, both with art and efficacy, must found the persuasion of it upon this, that it interferes not with any rational pleasure; that it bids nobody quit the enjoyment of any one thing that his reason can prove to him ought to be enjoyed. It is confessed, when, through the cross circumstances of a man's temper or condition, the enjoyment of a pleasure would certainly expose him to a greater inconvenience, then religion bids him quit it; that is, it bids him prefer the endurance of a lesser evil before a greater; and nature itself does no less. Religion, therefore, entrenches upon none of our privileges, invades none of our pleasures; it may, indeed, sometimes command us to change, but never totally to abjure them.

But it is easily foreseen that this discourse will, in the very beginning of it, be encountered by an argument from experience, and therefore not more obvious than strong; namely, that it cannot but be the greatest trouble in the world for a man thus (as it were) even to shake off himself, and to defy his nature, by a perpetual thwarting of his innate appetites and desires; which yet is absolutely necessary to a severe and impartial proce-

cution of a course of piety: nay, and we have this asserted also by the verdict of Christ himself, who still makes the disciplines of self-denial and the cross, those terrible blows to flesh and blood, the indispensable requisites to the being of his disciples. All which being so, would not he that should be so hardy as to attempt to persuade men to piety from the pleasures of it, be liable to that invective taunt from all mankind, that the Israelites gave to Moses: "Wilt thou put out the eye of this people?" Wilt thou persuade us out of our first notions? Wilt thou demonstrate that there is an delight in a cross, any comfort in violent abridgment, and, which is the greatest paradox of all, that the highest pleasure is to abstain from it?

For answer to which, it must be confessed that all arguments whatsoever against experience are fallacious and therefore, in order to the clearing of the assertion laid down, I shall premise these two considerations.

1. That pleasure is in the nature of it a relative thing, and so imports a peculiar relation and correspondence to the state and condition of the person to whom it is a pleasure. For as those who discourse of atoms affirm that there are atoms of all forms, some round, some triangular, some square, and the like, and which are continually in motion, and never settle till they fall into a fit circumscription or place of the same figure; so there are the like great diversities of minds and objects; whence it is that this object striking upon a mind thus or thus disposed, flies off and rebounds without making any impression; but the same luck happening upon another, of a disposition as it

framed for it, is presently caught at, and gre
clasped into the nearest unions and embraces.

2. The other thing to be considered is this: the estate of all men by nature is more or less diff from that estate into which the same persons do or pass by the exercise of that which the philosop called virtue, and into which men are much effectually and sublimely translated by that whi call grace, that is, by the supernatural overpow operation of God's Spirit. The difference of two estates consists in this: that in the form sensitive appetites rule and domineer; in the la supreme faculty of the soul, called reason, sw sceptre, and acts the whole man above the i demands of appetite and affection.

That the distinction between these two is n figment, framed only to serve an hypothesis in and that there is no man but is really under c he is under the other, I shall prove, by s reason why it is so, or rather, indeed, why but be so. And it is this: because every i beginning of his life, for several years, is ca of exercising his sensitive faculties and desir of reason not showing itself till about the se of his age, and then at length but (as it wer in very imperfect essays and discoveries. No most undeniably evident that every faculty grows stronger and stronger by exercise, wonder at all, when a man, for the space (six years, and those the years of ductility a sion, has been wholly ruled by the propension.

at that age very eager and impetuous; that then, after all, his reason, beginning to exert and put forth itself, finds the man prepossessed and under another power: so that it has much ado by many little steps and gradual conquests to recover its prerogative from the usurpations of appetite, and so to subject the whole man to its dictates, the difficulty of which is not conquered by some men all their days. And this is one true ground of the difference between a state of nature and a state of grace, which some are pleased to scoff at in divinity, who think that they confute all that they laugh at, not knowing that it may be solidly evinced by mere reason and philosophy.

These two considerations being premised, namely, that pleasure implies a proportion and agreement to the respective states and conditions of men, and that the state of men by nature is vastly different from the estate into which grace or virtue transplants them, all that objection levelled against the foregoing assertion is very easily resolvable.

For there is no doubt but a man, while he resigns himself up to the brutish guidance of sense and appetite, has no relish at all for the spiritual refined delights of a soul clarified by grace and virtue. The pleasures of an angel can never be the pleasures of a hog. But this is the thing that we contend for: that a man, having once advanced himself to a state of superiority over the control of his inferior appetites, finds an infinitely more solid and sublime pleasure in the delights proper to his reason, than the same person had ever conveyed to him by the bare ministry of his

senses. His taste is absolutely changed; and therefore that which pleased him formerly becomes flat and insipid to his appetite, now grown more masculine and severe. For as age and maturity passes a real and a marvellous change upon the diet and recreations of the same person, so that no man at the years and vigour of thirty is either fond of sugar-plums or rattles; in like manner, when reason, by the assistance of grace, has prevailed over and outgrown the encroachments of sense, the delights of sensuality are to such an one but as an hobby-horse would be to a councillor of state, or as tasteless as a bundle of hay to an hungry lion. Every alteration of a man's condition infallibly infers an alteration of his pleasures.

The Athenians laughed the physiognomist to scorn, who, pretending to read men's minds in their foreheads, described Socrates for a crabbed, lustful, proud, ill-natured person; they knowing how directly contrary he was to that dirty character. But Socrates bid them forbear laughing at the man, for that he had given them a most exact account of his nature; but what they saw in him so contrary at the present was, from the conquest that he had got over his natural disposition by philosophy. And now let any one consider whether that anger, that revenge, that wantonness and ambition, that were the proper pleasures of Socrates, under his natural temper of crabbed, lustful, and proud, could have at all affected or enamoured the mind of the same Socrates, made gentle, chaste, and humble by philosophy.

Aristotle says, that were it possible to put a young

man's eye into an old man's head, he would see as plainly and clearly as the other: so, could we infuse the inclinations and principles of a virtuous person into him that prosecutes his debauches with the greatest keenness of desire and sense of delight, he would loath and reject them as heartily as he now pursues them. Diogenes, being asked at a feast, why he did not continue eating as the rest did, answered him that asked him with another question: "Pray why do you eat?" "Why, says he, for my pleasure." "Why, so," says Diogenes, "do I abstain for my pleasure." And therefore the vain, the vicious, and luxurious person argues at an high rate of inconsequence, when he makes his particular desires the general measure of other men's delights. But the case is so plain, that I shall not upbraid any man's understanding by endeavouring to give it any farther illustration.

But still, after all, I must not deny that the change and passage from a state of nature to a state of virtue is laborious, and consequently irksome and unpleasant; and to this it is that all the fore-mentioned expressions of our Saviour do allude. But surely the baseness of one condition and the generous excellency of the other is a sufficient argument to induce any one to a change. For as no man would think it a desirable thing to preserve the itch upon himself only for the pleasure of scratching, that attends that loathsome distemper; so neither can any man that would be faithful to his reason yield his ear to be bored through by his domineering appetites, and so choose to serve them for ever, only for those poor thin gratifications of sensuality that

they are able to reward him with. The ascent up the hill is hard and tedious, but the serenity and fair prospect at the top is sufficient to incite the labour of undertaking it, and to reward it being undertook. But the difference of these two conditions of men, as the foundation of their different pleasures, being thus made out, to press men with arguments to pass from one to the other, is not directly in the way or design of this discourse.

Yet before I come to declare positively the pleasures that are to be found in the ways of religion, one of the grand duties of which is stated upon repentance, a thing expressed to us by the grim names of mortification, crucifixion, and the like, and that I may not proceed only upon absolute negations without some concessions, we will see whether this so harsh, dismal, and affrighting duty of repentance is so entirely gall as to admit of no mixture, no allay of sweetness, to reconcile it to the apprehensions of reason and nature.

Now, repentance consists properly of two things:—

1. Sorrow for sin.

2. Change of life.

A word briefly of them both.

1. And, first, for sorrow for sin. Usually the sting of sorrow is this, that it neither removes nor alters the thing we sorrow for, and so is but a kind of reproach to our reason, which will be sure to accost us with this dilemma: Either the thing we sorrow for is to be remedied, or it is not. If it is, why then do we spend the time in mourning, which should be spent in an active applying of remedies? but if it is not, then is

our sorrow vain and superfluous, as tending to no real effect. For no man can weep his father or his friend out of the grave, or mourn himself out of a bankrupt condition. But this spiritual sorrow is effectual to one of the greatest and highest purposes that mankind can be concerned in. It is a means to avert an impendent wrath, to disarm an offended omnipotence, and even to fetch a soul out of the very jaws of hell. So that the end and consequence of this sorrow sweetens the sorrow itself: and as Solomon says, “In the midst of laughter the heart is sorrowful;” so in the midst of sorrow here the heart may rejoice: for while it mourns, it reads, that “those that mourn shall be comforted;” and so, while the penitent weeps with one eye, he views his deliverance with the other. But then for the external expressions and vent of sorrow. We know that there is a certain pleasure in weeping; it is the discharge of a big and a swelling grief, of a full and a strangling discontent; and therefore he that never had such a burden upon his heart, as to give him opportunity thus to ease it, has one pleasure in this world yet to come.

2. As for the other part of repentance, which is change of life, this, indeed, may be troublesome in the entrance; but it is but the first bold onset, the first resolute violence and invasion upon a vicious habit, that is so sharp and afflicting. Every impression of the lancet cuts, but it is the first only that smart. Besides, it is an argument hugely unreasonable to plead the pain of passing from a vicious estate, unless it were proved that there was none in the continuance under it. But surely, when we read of the service, the

bondage, and the captivity of sinners, we are not entertained only with the air of words and metaphors; and, instead of truth, put off with similitudes. Let him that says it is a trouble to refrain from a debauch, convince us that it is not a greater to undergo one; and that the confessor did not impose a shrewd penance upon the drunken man by bidding him go and be drunk again; and that lisping, raging, redness of eyes, and what is not fit to be named in such an audience, is not more toilsome than to be clean, and quiet, and discreet, and respected for being so. All the trouble that is in it is the trouble of being sound, being cured, and being recovered. But if there be great arguments for health, then certainly there are the same for the obtaining it; and so keeping a due proportion between spirituals and temporals, we neither have, nor pretend to, greater arguments for repentance.

Having thus now cleared off all that by way of objection can lie against the truth asserted, by showing the proper qualification of the subject, to whom only the "ways of wisdom" can be "ways of pleasantness;" for the farther prosecution of the matter in hand I shall show what are those properties that so peculiarly set off and enhance the excellency of this pleasure.

1. The first is, that it is the proper pleasure of that part of man which is the largest and most comprehensive of pleasure, and that is his mind; a substance of a boundless comprehension. The mind of man is an image not only of God's spirituality, but of his infinity. It is not like any of the senses, limited to

this or that kind of object ; as the sight intermeddles not with that which affects the smell, but with a universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon and takes them in all. It is (as I may so say) an ocean, into which all the little rivulets of sensation, both external and internal, discharge themselves. It is framed by God to receive all and more than nature can afford it, and so to be its own motive to seek for something above nature. Now this is that part of man to which the pleasures of religion properly belong, and that in double respect.

I. In reference to speculation, as it sustains the nature of understanding.

II. In reference to practice, as it sustains the nature of conscience.

1. And, first, for speculation ; the pleasures of which have been sometimes so great, so intense, so engrossing of all the powers of the soul, that there has been no room left for any other pleasure. It has so called together all the spirits to that one work, that there has been no supply to carry on the inferior operations of nature. Contemplation feels no hunger, nor is sensible of any thirst, but of that after knowledge. How frequent and exalted a pleasure did David find from his meditation in the Divine Law ! all the day long it was the theme of his thoughts. The affairs of state, the government of his kingdom, might indeed employ him, but it was this only that refreshed his mind.

How short of this are the delights of the epicure ! How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of eating and of the thinking man ! Indeed, as dis-

as the silence of an Archimedes in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a sow at her wash. Nothing is comparable to the pleasure of an active and a prevailing thought, a thought prevailing over the difficulty and obscurity of the object, and refreshing the soul with new discoveries and images of things; and thereby extending the bounds of apprehension, and, as it were, enlarging the territories of reason.

Now this pleasure of the speculation of divine things is advanced upon a double account.

1. The greatness.

2. The newness of the object.

1. And, first, for the greatness of it. It is no less than the great God himself, and that both in his nature and his works. For the eye of reason, like that of the eagle, directs itself chiefly to the sun, to a glory that neither admits of a superior nor an equal. Religion carries the soul to the study of every divine attribute. It poses it with the amazing thoughts of omnipotence, of a power able to fetch up such a glorious fabric, as this of the world, out of the abyss of vanity and nothing, and able to throw it back into the same original nothing again. It drowns us in the speculation of the Divine omniscience, that can maintain a steady infallible comprehension of all events in themselves contingent and accidental, and certainly know that which does not certainly exist. It confounds the greatest subtilties of speculation with the riddles of God's omnipresence, that can spread a single individual substance through all spaces, and yet without any commensuration of parts to any, or circumscription within

any, though totally in every one. And then for his eternity, which nonpluses the strongest and clearest conception to comprehend how one single act of duration should measure all periods and portions of time, without any of the distinguishing parts of succession. Likewise for his justice, which shall prey upon the sinner for ever, satisfying itself by a perpetual miracle, rendering the creature immortal in the midst of the flames ; always consuming, but never consumed. With the like wonders we may entertain our speculations from his mercy, his beloved, his triumphant attribute ; an attribute, if it were possible, something more than infinite ; for even his justice is so, and his mercy transcends that. Lastly, we may contemplate upon his supernatural astonishing works ; particularly in the resurrection and reparation of the same numerical body by a re-union of all the scattered parts, to be at length disposed of into an estate of eternal woe or bliss ; as also the greatness and strangeness of the beatific vision ; how a created eye should be so fortified, as to bear all those glories that stream from the fountain of uncreated light, the meanest expression of which light is, that it is unexpressible. Now what great and high objects are these for a rational contemplation to busy itself upon ! Heights that scorn the reach of our prospect, and depths in which the tallest reason will never touch the bottom. Yet surely the pleasure arising from thence is great and noble, forasmuch as they afford perpetual matter and employment to the inquisitiveness of human reason, and so are large enough for it to take its full scope and range in ; which, when it has sucked

and drained the utmost of an object, naturally lays it aside, and neglects it as a dry and an empty thing.

2. As the things belonging to religion entertain our speculation with great objects, so they entertain it also with new ; and novelty, we know, is the great parent of pleasure, upon which account it is that men are so much pleased with variety, and variety is nothing else but a continued novelty. The Athenians, who were the professed and most diligent improvers of their reason, made it their whole business “ to hear or to tell some new thing ;” for the truth is, newness, especially in great matters, was a worthy entertainment for a searching mind ; it was, as I may so say, a high taste, fit for the relish of an Athenian reason. And thereupon the mere unheard-of strangeness of “ Jesus and the resurrection,” made them desirous to hear it discoursed of to them again. Acts, xvii. 32. But how would it have employed their searching faculties had the mystery of the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole economy of man’s redemption been explained to them ? For how could it ever enter into the thoughts of reason, that a satisfaction could be paid to an infinite justice, or that two natures so unconceivably different as the human and divine could unite into one person ? The knowledge of these things could derive from nothing else but pure revelation, and, consequently, must be purely new to the highest discourses of mere nature. Now, that the newness of an object so exceedingly pleases and strikes the mind, appears from this one consideration, that every thing pleases more in expectation than fruition ; and expecta-

tion supposes a thing as yet new, the hoped-for discovery of which is the pleasure that entertains the expecting and inquiring mind; whereas actual discovery, as it were, rifles and deflowers the newness and freshness of the object, and so, for the most part, makes it cheap, familiar, and contemptible.

It is clear, therefore, that if there be any pleasure to the mind from speculation, and if this pleasure of speculation be advanced by the greatness and newness of the things contemplated upon, all this is to be found in the ways of religion.

2. In the next place, religion is a pleasure to the mind as it respects practice, and so sustains the name of conscience. And conscience undoubtedly is the great repository and magazine of all those pleasures that can afford any solid refreshment to the soul; for when this is calm, and serene, and absolving, then properly a man enjoys all things, and what is more, himself: for that he must do before he can enjoy any thing else. But it is only a pious life, led exactly by the rules of a severe religion, that can authorise a man's conscience to speak comfortably to him. It is this that must word the sentence, before the conscience can pronounce it; and then it will do it with majesty and authority; it will not whisper, but proclaim a jubilee to the mind; it will not drop, but pour in oil upon the wounded heart. And is there any pleasure comparable to that which springs from hence? The pleasure of conscience is not only greater than all other pleasures, but may also serve instead of them; for they only please and affect the mind *in transitu*, in the pitiful narrow compass of actual

fruition; whereas that of conscience entertains and feeds it a long time after, with durable, lasting reflections.

And thus much for the first ennobling property of the pleasure belonging to religion; namely, that it is the pleasure of the mind, and that both as it relates to speculation, and is called the understanding; and as it relates to practice, and is called the conscience.

2. The second ennobling property of it is, that it is such a pleasure as never satiates or wearies; for it properly affects the spirit, and a spirit feels no weariness, as being privileged from the causes of it. But can the epicure say so of any of the pleasures that he so much dotes upon? Do they not expire while they satisfy, and, after a few minutes' refreshment, determine in loathing and unquietness? How short is the interval between a pleasure and a burden? How undiscernable the transition from one to the other? Pleasure dwells no longer upon the appetite than the necessities of nature, which are quickly and easily provided for; and then all that follows is a load and an oppression. Every morsel to a satisfied hunger is only a new labour to a tired digestion. Every draught to him that has quenched his thirst is but a farther quenching of nature; a provision for rheum and diseases; a drowning of the quickness and activity of the spirits.

He that prolongs his meals and sacrifices his time as well as his other conveniences to his luxury, how quickly does he outsit his pleasure! And then how is *all the following time bestowed upon ceremony and surfeit; till at length, after a long fatigue of eating, and*

drinking, and babbling, he concludes the great work of dining genteelly, and so makes a shift to rise from table that he may lie down upon his bed ! Where, after he has slept himself into some use of himself, by much ado he staggers to his table again, and there acts over the same brutish scene : so that he passes his whole life in a dozed condition, between sleeping and waking, with a kind of drowsiness and confusion upon his senses ; which what pleasure it can be, is hard to conceive ; all that is of it dwells upon the tip of his tongue and within the compass of his palate : a worthy prize for a man to purchase with the loss of his time, his reason, and himself !

Nor is that man less deceived, that thinks to maintain a constant tenure of pleasure by a continual pursuit of sports and recreations. For it is most certainly true of all these things, that as they refresh a man when he is weary, so they weary him when he is refreshed ; which is an evident demonstration, that God never designed the use of them to be continual, by putting such an emptiness in them as should so quickly fail and lurch the expectation.

The most voluptuous and loose person breathing, were he but tied to follow his hawks and his hounds, his dice and his courtships, every day, would find it the greatest torment and calamity that could befall him ; he would fly to the mines and the galleys for his recreation, and to the spade and the mattock for a diversion from the misery of a continual unintermitted pleasure.

But, on the contrary, the providence of God has so ordered the course of things, that there is no action, the

usefulness of which has made it the matter of duty, and of a profession, but a man may bear the continual pursuit of it without loathing or satiety.

The same shop and trade that employs a man in his youth, employs him also in his age. Every morning he rises fresh to his hammer and his anvil; he passes the day singing: custom has naturalised his labour to him; his shop is his element, and he cannot with any enjoyment of himself live out of it. Whereas no custom can make the painfulness of a debauch easy or pleasing to a man, since nothing can be pleasant that is unnatural. But now, if God has interwoven such a pleasure with the works of our ordinary calling, how much superior and more refined must that be that arises from the survey of a pious and well-governed life? Surely as much as Christianity is nobler than a trade.

And then for the constant freshness of it: it is such a pleasure as can never cloy or overwork the mind; for surely no man was ever weary of thinking, much less of thinking that he had done well or virtuously, that he had conquered such and such a temptation, or offered violence to any of his exorbitant desires. This is a delight that grows and improves under thought and reflection; and while it exercises, does also endear itself to the mind, at the same time employing and inflaming the meditations. All pleasures that affect the body must needs weary, because they transport, and all transportation is a violence; and no violence can be lasting, but determines upon the falling of the spirits, which are not able to keep up that height of motion that the pleasure of the senses raises them to:

and therefore how inevitably does an immoderate laughter end in a sigh ; which is only nature's recovering itself after a force done to it. But the religious pleasures of a well-disposed mind moves gently, and therefore constantly. It does not affect by rapture and ecstasy, but is like the pleasure of health, which is still and sober, yet greater and stronger than those that call up the senses with grosser and more affecting impressions. God has given no man a body as strong as his appetites, but has corrected the boundlessness of his voluptuous desires, by stinting his strengths and contracting his capacities.

But, to look upon those pleasures, also, that have an higher object than the body, as those that spring from honour and grandeur of condition ; yet we shall find that even these are not so fresh and constant, but the mind can nauseate them, and quickly feel the thinness of a popular breath. Those that are so fond of applause while they pursue it, how little do they taste it when they have it ! Like lightning, it only flashes upon the face and is gone, and it is well if it does not hurt the man. But for greatness of place, though it is fit and necessary that some persons in the world should be in love with a splendid servitude, yet, certainly, they must be much beholding to their own fancy that they can be pleased at it ; for he that rises up early and goes to bed late, only to receive addresses, to read and answer petitions, is really as much tied and abridged in his freedom, as he that waits all that time to present one. And what pleasure can it be to be encumbered with dependences, thronged and surrounded with peti-

tioners, and those persons, sometimes, all suitors for the same thing: whereupon all but one will be sure to depart grumbling, because they miss of what they think their due; and even that one scarce thankful, because he thinks he has no more than his due? In a word, if it is a pleasure to be envied and shot at; to be maligned standing, and to be despised falling; to endeavour that which is impossible, which is to please all, and to suffer for not doing it; then is it a pleasure to be great, and to be able to dispose of men's fortunes and preferments.

But, farther, to proceed from hence to yet an higher degree of pleasure, indeed the highest on this side that of religion, which is the pleasure of friendship and conversation. Friendship must confessedly be allowed the top, the flower, and crown of all temporal enjoyments. Yet, has not this also its flaws and its dark side? For is not my friend a man, and is not friendship subject to the same mortality and change that men are? And in case a man loves, and is not loved again, does he not think that he has cause to hate as heartily, and ten times more eagerly, than ever he loved; and then to be an enemy, and once to have been a friend, does it not embitter the rupture and aggravate the calamity? But, admitting that my friend continues so to the end, yet, in the mean time, is he all perfection, all virtue, and discretion? Has he not humours to be endured, as well as kindnesses to be enjoyed? And am I sure to smell the rose, without sometimes feeling the thorn?

And then, lastly, for company: though it may

reprieve a man from his melancholy, yet it cannot secure him from his conscience, nor from sometimes being alone. And what is all that a man enjoys from a week's, a month's, or a year's converse, comparable to what he feels for one hour, when his conscience shall take him aside, and rate him by himself?

In short, run over the whole circle of all earthly pleasures, and I dare affirm, that had not God secured a man a solid pleasure from his own actions, after he had rolled from one to another, and enjoyed them all, he would be forced to complain that either they were not indeed pleasures, or that pleasure was not satisfaction.

3. The third ennobling property of the pleasure that accrues to a man from religion is, that it is such an one as is in nobody's power, but only in his that has it; so that he that has the property may be also sure of the perpetuity. And tell me so of any outward enjoyment that mortality is capable of. We are generally at the mercy of men's rapine, avarice, and violence, whether we shall be happy or no: for if I build my felicity upon my estate or reputation, I am happy as long as the tyrant or the railer will give me leave to be so; but when my concernment takes up no more room or compass than myself, then so long as I know where to breathe and to exist, I know also where to be happy, for I know I may be so in my own breast, in the court of my own conscience, where, if I can but prevail with myself to be innocent, I need bribe neither judge nor officer to be pronounced so. The pleasure of the religious man is an easy and a

portable pleasure, such an one as he carries about in his bosom, without alarming either the eye or envy of the world. A man, putting all his pleasures into this one, is like a traveller's putting all his goods into one jewel: the value is the same, and the convenience greater.

There is nothing that can raise a man to that generous absoluteness of condition, as neither to cringe, to fawn, or to depend meanly, but that which gives him that happiness within himself, for which men depend upon others; for surely I need salute no great man's threshold, sneak to none of his friends or servants, to speak a good word for me to my conscience. It is a noble and a sure defiance of a great malice, backed with a great interest, which yet can have no advantage of a man, but from his own expectations of something that is without himself. But if I can make my duty my delight; if I can feast, and please, and caress my mind with the pleasures of worthy speculations or virtuous practices, let greatness and malice vex and abridge me if they can; my pleasures are as free as my will, no more to be controlled than my choice, or the unlimited range of my thoughts and my desires.

Nor is this kind of pleasure only out of the reach of any outward violence; but even those things also that make a much closer impression upon us, which are the irresistible decays of nature, have yet no influence at all upon this: for when age itself, which, of all things in the world, will not be baffled or defied, shall begin to arrest, seize, and remind us of our mortality, by pains, aches, deadness of limbs, and dulness of senses,

yet then the pleasure of the mind shall be in its full youth, vigour, and freshness. A palsy may as well shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair the delight of conscience. For it lies within, it centres in the heart, it grows into the very substance of the soul; so that it accompanies a man to his grave: he never outlives it, and that for this cause only, because he cannot outlive himself.

And thus I have endeavoured to describe the excellency of that pleasure that is to be found in the ways of a religious wisdom, by those excellent properties that do attend it; which, whether they reach the description that has been given them or no, every man may convince himself, by the best of demonstrations, which is his own trial.

Now, from all this discourse, this, I am sure, is a most natural and direct consequence: that if the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, then such as are not ways of pleasantness are not truly and properly ways of religion. Upon which ground it is easy to see what judgment is to be passed upon all those affected, uncommanded, absurd austerities, so much prized, and exercised by some of the Romish profession. Pilgrimages, going barefoot, hair-shirts, and whips, with other such gospel artillery, are their only helps to devotion: —things never enjoined, either by the prophets under the Jewish, or by the apostles under the Christian economy; who yet surely understood the proper and the most efficacious instruments of piety, as well as any confessor or friar of all the order of St. Francis, or any casuist whatsoever.

It seems that, with them, a man sometimes cannot be a penitent, unless he also turns vagabond, and foot it to Jerusalem; or wanders over this or that part of the world, to visit the shrine of such or such a pretended saint; though, perhaps, in his life, ten times more ridiculous than themselves. Thus that which was Cain's curse is become their religion. He that thinks to expiate a sin by going barefoot, does the penance of a goose; and only makes one folly the atonement of another. Paul, indeed, was scourged and beaten by the Jews, but we never read that he beat or scourged himself; and if they think that his "keeping under of his body" imports so much, they must first prove that the body cannot be kept under by a virtuous mind, and that the mind cannot be made virtuous but by a scourge; and, consequently, that thongs and whipcord are means of grace, and things necessary to salvation. The truth is, if men's religion lies no deeper than their skin, it is possible that they may scourge themselves into very great improvements.

But they will find that bodily exercise touches not the soul; and that neither pride, nor lust, nor covetousness, nor any other vice, was ever mortified by corporal disciplines. It is not the back, but the heart, that must bleed for sin: and consequently, that in this whole course they are like men out of their way: let them lash on never so fast, they are not at all nearer to their journey's end; and howsoever they deceive themselves and others, they may as well expect to bring a cart as a soul to heaven by such means. What arguments they have to beguile poor, simple, unstable souls

with, I know not; but surely the practical casuistical, that is, the principal vital part of their religion, savours very little of spirituality.

And now, upon the result of all, I suppose that to exhort men to be religious is only in other words to exhort them to take their pleasure: — a pleasure, high, rational, and angelical; a pleasure embased with no appendant sting, no consequent loathing, no remorse or bitter farewells; but such an one as, being honey in the mouth, never turns to gall or gravel in the belly; a pleasure made for the soul, and the soul for that; suitable to its spirituality, and equal to all its capacities; such an one as grows fresher upon enjoyment, and though continually fed upon, yet is never devoured; a pleasure that a man may call as properly his own, as his soul and his conscience; neither liable to accident, nor exposed to injury. It is the foretaste of heaven, and the earnest of eternity: in a word, it is such an one as, being begun in grace, passes into glory, blessedness, and immortality, and those pleasures that “neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive.” To which God of his mercy vouchsafe to bring us all: to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING AS SCHOLARS.

[ISAAC BARROW, D.D.]

ROM. xii. 11.

Not slothful in business.

I PROCEED to the other sort of persons whom we did propound, namely, —

II. Scholars; and that on them particularly great engagements do lie to be industrious, is most evident from various considerations.

The nature and design of this calling doth suppose industry; the matter and extent of it doth require industry; the worth of it doth highly deserve industry. We are, in special gratitude to God, in charity to men, in due regard to ourselves, bound unto it.

1. First, I say, the nature and design of our calling doth suppose industry. “There is,” saith the divine Preacher, “a man whose labour is in wisdom, in knowledge, and in equity.”^a Such men are scholars; so that we are indeed no scholars, but absurd usurpers of the name, if we are not laborious; for what is a scholar but one who retireth his person and avocateth his mind

^a Eccles. ii. 21.

from other occupations and worldly entertainment that he may σχολάζειν, *vacare studiis*, employ his mind and leisure on study and learning, in the search of truth, the quest of knowledge, the improvement of his reason?^a Wherefore an idle scholar, a lazy student, a sluggish man of learning, is nonsense.

What is learning, but a diligent attendance to instruction of masters skilled in any knowledge, and conveying their notions to us in word or writing?

What is study, but an earnest, steady, persevering application of mind to some matter, on which we employ our thoughts with intent to see through it? What, in Solomon's language, are these scholastic occupations but "inclining the ear and applying our heart to understanding?"^b than which commonly there is nothing more laborious, more straining nature, and more tiring our spirits; whence it is well compared to the most painful exercises of body and soul.

The Wise Man, advising men to seek wisdom, which is the proper design of our calling, doth intimate that work to be like digging in the mines for silver, and like searching all about for concealed treasures, than which there can hardly be any more difficult and painful task. "If," saith he, "thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, thou shalt thou understand."^c Otherwhere he compareth the same work to assiduous watching and waiting, like that of a guard or a client, which are the greatest instances of diligence. "Blessed," saith he (or Wisdom, by her

^a Ἡ σοφία γραμματέως ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς.

^b Prov. ii. 2.

Ecclus. xxxviii. 24.

^c Prov. ii. 4, 5.

PARTICULAR CALLING
OF SCHOLARS.

BARROW, D.D.]

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saith blessed), "is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."^a

Wherefore, if we will approve ourselves to be what we are called, and what we pretend to be; if we will avoid being impostors, assuming a name not due to us, we must not be slothful. Farther,

2. The matter and extent of our business doth require industry from us: the matter of it, which is truth and knowledge; the extent, which is very large and comprehensive, taking in all truth, all knowledge, worthy our study and useful for the designs of it.

Our business is to find truth; the which, even in matters of high importance, is not easily to be discovered; being as a vein of silver, encompassed with earth and mixed with dross, deeply laid in the obscurity of things, wrapt up in false appearances, entangled with objections, and perplexed with debates; being, therefore, not readily discoverable, especially by minds clouded with prejudices, lusts, passions, partial affections, appetites of honour and interest; whence to descry it requireth the most curious observation and solicitous circumspection that can be; together with great pains in the preparation and purgation of our minds toward the inquiry of it.

Our business is to attain knowledge, not concerning obvious and vulgar matters, but about sublime, abstruse, intricate, and knotty subjects, remote from common observation and sense; to get sure and exact *notions* about which will try the best forces of our *mind* with their utmost endeavours; in firmly settling

^a Prov. viii. 34.

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And if to get a competent knowledge about a few
things, or to be reasonably skilful in any sort of learn
ing, be difficult, how much industry doth it require
be well seen in many, or to have waded through the
vast compass of learning, in no part whereof a scholar
may conveniently or handsomely be ignorant; seeing
there is such a connection of things and dependence
notions, that one part of learning doth confer light
another, that a man can hardly well understand a
thing without knowing divers other things; that
will be a lame scholar, who hath not an insight in
many kinds of knowledge; that he can hardly be
good scholar who is not a general one.

To understand so many languages, which are
shells of knowledge; to comprehend so many sciences
full of various theorems and problems; to peruse
many histories of ancient and modern times; to know
the world, both natural and human; to be acquainted
with the various inventions, inquiries, opinions, and
controversies of learned men; to skill the arts of
pressing our mind, and imparting our conceptions to
advantage, so as to instruct or persuade others; these
are works, indeed, which will exercise and strain
faculties (our reason, our fancy, our memory) in painful
study.

The knowledge of such things is not innate to us
doth not of itself spring up in our minds; it is not
ways incident by chance, or infused by grace

rarely by miracle); common observation doth not produce it; it cannot be purchased at any rate, except by that for which it was said of old, “the gods sell all things^a”, that is, for pains; without which the best wit and greatest capacity may not render a man learned, as the best soil will not yield good fruit or grain if they be not planted or sown therein.

Consider, if you please, what a scholar Solomon was. Beside his skill in politics, which was his principal faculty and profession, whereby he did, with admirable dexterity and prudence, manage the affairs of that great kingdom, “judging his people, and discerning what was good and bad^b,” accurately dispensing justice; settling his country in a most flourishing state of peace, order, plenty, and wealth; largely extending his territory; “so that his wisdom of this kind was famous over the earth^c,” beside, I say, this civil wisdom, he had an exquisite skill in natural philosophy and medicine; for “he spake of trees, or plants, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”^d

He was well versed in mathematics; for it is said, “Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt^e,” the wisdom of which nations did consist in those sciences. And of his mechanic skill he left for a monument the most glorious structure that ever stood on earth.

^a Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.

^b 1 Kings, iii. 9.

^c 1 Kings, iv. 20. 25.; x. 27.; iv. 21, &c.; x. 6. 24.

^d 1 Kings, iv. 33.

^e 1 Kings, iv. 30.

He was very skilful in poetry and music; for he did himself “compose above a thousand songs^a,” whereof one yet extant declareth the loftiness of his fancy, the richness of his vein, and the elegancy of his style.

He had great ability in rhetoric; according to that in Wisdom: “God granteth me to speak as I would^b,” and that in Ecclesiastes: “The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words^c,” a great instance of which faculty we have in that admirable prayer of his composition at the dedication of the Temple.^d

He did wonderfully excel in ethics: concerning which he “spake three thousand proverbs^e,” or moral aphorisms; and “moreover,” saith Ecclesiastes, “because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs^f,” the which did contain a great variety of notable observations and useful directions for common life, couched in pithy expressions.

As for theology, as the study of that was the chief study to which he exhorteth others^g (as to the head or principal part of wisdom), so, questionless, he was himself most conversant therein; for proof whereof he did leave so many excellent theorems and precepts of divinity to us.

In fine, there is no sort of knowledge to which he did not apply his study; witness himself in those words: “I gave my heart to seek and search out by

^a 1 Kings, iv. 32.

^d 1 Kings, viii. 12.

^g Prov. ii. 5, &c.

^b Wisd. vii. 15.

^e 1 Kings, iv. 32.

^c Eccles. xii. 10.

^f Eccles. xii. 9.

wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven.”^a

Such a scholar was he ; and such if we have a noble ambition to be, we must use the course he did ; which was, first, in his heart to prefer wisdom before all worldly things ; then to pray to God for it, or for his blessing in our quest of it ; then to use the means of attaining it, diligent searching and hard study : for that this was his method he telleth us : “ I,” saith he, “ applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things.”^b

Such considerations show the necessity of industry for a scholar. But,

3. The worth, and excellency, and great utility, together with the pleasantness of his vocation, deserving the highest industry, do superadd much obligation thereto.

We are much bound to be diligent out of ingenuity, and in gratitude to God, who by his gracious providence hath assigned to us a calling so worthy, an employment so comfortable, a way of life no less commodious, beneficial, and delightful to ourselves, than serviceable to God, and useful for the world.

If we had our option and choice, what calling would we desire before this of any whereto men are affixed ? How could we better employ our mind, or place our labour, or spend our time, or pass our pilgrimage in this world, than in scholastical occupations ?

It were hard to reckon up or to express the numberless great advantages of this calling : I shall therefore

^a Eccles. i. 13.

^b Eccles. vii. 25.

only touch some, which readily fall under my thought, recommending its value to us.

It is a calling, the design whereof conspireth with the general end of our being; the perfection of our nature in its endowments, and the fruition of it in its best operations.

It is a calling which doth not employ us in bodily toil, in worldly care, in pursuit of trivial affairs, in sordid drudgeries; but in those angelical operations of soul, the contemplation of truth, and attainment of wisdom; which are the worthiest exercises of our reason, and sweetest entertainments of our mind; the most precious wealth, and most beautiful ornaments of our soul; whereby our faculties are improved, are polished and refined, are enlarged in their power and use by habitual accessions: the which are conducive to our own greatest profit and benefit, as serving to rectify our wills, to compose our affections, to guide our lives in the ways of virtue, to bring us unto felicity.^a

It is a calling which, being duly followed, will most sever us from the vulgar sort of men, and advance us above the common pitch; enduing us with light to see farther than other men, disposing us to affect better things, and to slight those meaner objects of human desire, on which men commonly dote; freeing us from the erroneous conceits and from the perverse affections of common people. It is said, διπλὸν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα, men of learning are double-sighted: but it is true that, in many cases, they see infinitely farther than a vulgar sight doth reach. And if a man by

^a Prov. ii. 4. 10, 11. 20, 21.

serious study doth acquire a clear and solid judgment of things, so as to assign to each its due weight and price; if he accordingly be inclined in his heart to affect and pursue them; if from clear and right notions of things, a meek and ingenuous temper of mind, a command and moderation of passions, a firm integrity, and a cordial love of goodness do spring, he thereby becometh another kind of thing, much different from those brutish men (beasts of the people) who blindly follow the motions of their sensual appetite, or the suggestions of their fancy, or their mistaken prejudices.

It is a calling which hath these considerable advantages, that, by virtue of improvement therein, we can see with our own eyes, and guide ourselves by our own reasons, not being led blindfold about, or depending precariously on the conduct of others, in matters of highest concern to us; that we are exempted from giddy credulity, from wavering levity, from fond admiration of persons and things, being able to distinguish of things, and to settle our judgments about them, and to get an intimate acquaintance with them, assuring to us their true nature and worth; that we are also thereby rescued from admiring ourselves, and that overweening self-conceitedness, of which the Wise Man saith, “The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.”^a

It is a calling whereby we are qualified and enabled to do God service; to gratify his desires, to promote his honour, to advance his interests; to render his name glorious in the world, by teaching, maintaining,

^a Prov. xxvi. 16.

and propagating his truth; by persuading men to render their due love, reverence, and obedience to him; than which we can have no more honourable or satisfactory employment, more like to that of the glorious and blessed spirits.

It is a calling, the due prosecution whereof doth ingratiate us with God, and procureth his favour; rendering us fit objects of his love, and entitling us thereto in regard to our qualities, and recompence of our works; for “God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom^a,” and, “So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.”^b

It is a calling whereby with greatest advantage we may benefit men, and deserve well of the world; drawing men to the knowledge and service of God, reclaiming them from error and sin, rescuing them from misery, and conducting them to happiness; by clear instruction, by faithful admonition, by powerful exhortation. And what can be more noble than to be the lights of the world, the guides of practice to men, the authors of so much good, so egregious benefactors to mankind?

It is a calling most exempt from the cares, the crosses, the turmoils, the factious jars, the anxious intrigues, the vexatious molestations of the world; its business lying out of the road of those mischiefs, wholly lying in solitary retirement, or being transacted in the most innocent and ingenuous company.

It is a calling least subject to any danger or disappointment, wherein we may well be assured not to miscarry or lose our labour; for the merchant indeed,

^a Wisd. vii. 28. Psalm v. 5.

^b Prov. iii. 4.

by manifold accidents, may lose his voyage, or find a bad market; the husbandman may plough and sow in vain: but the student hardly can fail of improving his stock, and reaping a good crop of knowledge, especially if he study with a conscientious mind, and pious reverence to God, imploring his gracious help and blessing.

It is a calling, the industry used wherein doth abundantly recompense itself by the pleasure and sweetness which it carrieth in it; so that the more pains one taketh, the more delight he findeth, feeling himself proportionably to grow in knowledge, and that his work becometh continually more easy to him.

It is a calling, the business whereof doth so exercise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us; being not (as other occupations are) a drawing in a mill, or a nauseous tedious repetition of the same work, but a continued progress toward fresh objects; our mind not being staked to one or a few poor matters, but having immense fields of contemplation, wherein it may everlastingly expatiate with great proficiency and pleasure.*

It is a calling which doth ever afford plentiful fruit, even in regard to the conveniences of this present and temporal state, the which sufficiently will requite the pains expended thereon: for if we be honestly industrious, we shall not want success; and succeeding, we shall not want a competence of wealth, of reputation, of interest in the world: for concerning wisdom, which is the result of honest study, the Wise Man telleth us, “Riches and honour are with her, yea, durable riches

* Γηράσκω δ' αὖτις πολλὰ διδασκόμενος.

and righteousness: length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her: she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.”^a In common experience, the wealth of the mind doth qualify for employments which have good recompences annexed to them; and neither God nor man will suffer him long to want who is endowed with worthy accomplishments of knowledge. It was a ridiculous providence in Nero, that if he should chance to lose his empire, he might live by fiddling: yet his motto was good. And Dionysius, another tyrant, found the benefit of it: *τὸ τεχνίον πᾶσα γαῖα τρέφει*, he that hath any good art, hath therein an estate and land in every place; he is secured against being reduced to extremity of any misfortune: “Wisdom,” saith the Wise Man, “is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.”^b Money is a defence of which fortune may bereave us; but wisdom is beyond its attacks, being a treasure seated in a place inaccessible to external impressions.

And as a learned man cannot be destitute of substance, so he cannot want credit, having such an ornament, than which none hath a more general estimation^c; and which can be of low rate only among that sort of folk, to whom Solomon saith, “How long, ye simple

^a Prov. viii. 18.; iii. 16.; iv. 8, 9.

^b Eccles. vii. 12.

^c Prov. xii. 8. “A man shall be commended according to his wisdom,”

ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge?"^a It is that which recommendeth a man in all company and procureth regard^b, every one yielding attention and acceptance to instructive, neat, apposite discourse; (that which the Scripture calleth "acceptable, pleasant, gracious words;") men think themselves obliged thereby by receiving information and satisfaction from it; and accordingly, "every man," saith the Wise Man, "shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer^c;" and "for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend^d;" and "the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious."^e It is that, an eminency wherein purchaseth lasting fame, and a life after death, in the good memory and opinion of posterity: "Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation."^f A fame no less great, and far more innocent, than acts of chivalry and martial prowess; for is not Aristotle as renowned for teaching the world with his pen, as Alexander for conquering it with his sword? Is not one far oftener mentioned than the other? Do not men hold themselves much more obliged to the learning of the philosopher than to the valour of the warrior? Indeed, the fame of all others is indebted to the pains of the scholar, and could not subsist but with and by his fame: *Dignum laude virum musa vetat mori*; learning consecrateth itself and its subject together, to immortal remembrance.

^a Prov. i. 22. 7.^b Prov. xxii. 17. 29.^c Prov. xxiv. 26.^d Prov. xxii. 11.^e Eccles. x. 12.^f Eccclus. xxxix. 9.

It is a calling that fitteth a man for all conditions and fortunes; so that he can enjoy prosperity with moderation, and sustain adversity with comfort: he that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.

In fine, it is a calling which Solomon, who had curiously observed and exactly compared and scanned, by reason and by experience, all other occupations and ways of life, did prefer above all others, and, we may presume, would sooner have parted with his royal state than with his learning; for “wisdom,” saith he, “is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding^a;” and, “Then I saw (then, that is, after a serious disquisition and discussion of things, I saw) that wisdom exceedeth folly (that is, knowledge excelleth ignorance) as light excelleth darkness.”^b

These things and much more may be said of learning in general; but if more distinctly we survey each part and each object of it, we shall find that each doth yield considerable emoluments and delights; benefit to our soul, advantage to our life, satisfaction to our mind.

The observation of things, and collection of experiments, how doth it enrich the mind with ideas, and breed a kind of familiar acquaintance with all things, so that nothing doth surprise us, or strike our mind with astonishment and admiration! And if our “eye be

^a Prov. iv. 7.

^b Eccles. ii. 13.

not satisfied with seeing, nor our ear filled with hearing^a," how much less is our mind satiated with the pleasures of speculating and observing that immense variety of objects subject to its view !

The exercise of our mind in rational discursiveness about things in quest of truth, canvassing questions, examining arguments for and against, how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our natural parts, enabling us to fix our thoughts on objects without roving, inuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about matters proposed ; preserving us from being easily abused by captious fallacies, gulled by specious pretences, tossed about with every doubt or objection started before us !

Invention of any kind (in discerning the causes of abstruse effects, in resolving hard problems, in demonstrating theorems, in framing composures of witty description, or forcible persuasion), how much doth it exceed the pleasure of hunting for any game, or of combating for any victory ! Do any man's children so much please him as these creatures of his brain ?

The reading of books, what is it but conversing with the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate thoughts, choicest notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression, and digested in exact method ?

And as to the particular matters or objects of study, all have their use and pleasure. I shall only touch them.

The very initial studies of tongues and grammatical literature are very profitable and necessary, as the inlets

^a Eccles. i. 8.

to knowledge, whereby we are enabled to understand wise men speaking their sense in their own terms and lively strain, whereby especially we are assisted to drink sacred knowledge out of the fountains, the Divine Oracles.

Luther would not part with a little Hebrew he had, for all the Turkish empire.

Rhetoric, or the art of conveying our thoughts to others by speech with advantages of clearness, force, and elegancy, so as to instruct, to persuade, to delight the auditors; of how great benefit is it, if it be well used! How much may it conduce to the service of God, and edification of men! What hath been a more effectual instrument of doing good, and working wonders, not only in the world but in the Church? How many souls have been converted from error, vanity, and vice, to truth, soberness, and virtue, by an eloquent Apollos^a, a Basil, a Chrysostom!

The perusal of history, how pleasant illumination of mind, how useful direction of life, how sprightly incentives to virtue doth it afford! How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expense of others, informing us about the ways of action, and the consequences thereof, by examples, without our own danger or trouble! How may it instruct and encourage us in piety, while therein we trace the paths of God in men, or observe the methods of Divine Providence; how the Lord and Judge of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he crosseth,

^a Ἄνθρωπος λόγιος, καὶ δυνατός. Acts, xviii. 24.

defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth iniquity and outrage; managing things with admirable temper of wisdom, to the good of mankind and advancement of his own glory!

The mathematical sciences, how pleasant is the speculation of them to the mind! How useful is the practice to common life! How do they whet and excite the mind! How do they inure it to strict reasoning and patient meditation!

Natural philosophy, the contemplation of this great theatre, or visible system presented before us; observing the various appearances therein, and inquiring into their causes; reflecting on the order, connection, and harmony of things; considering their original source, and their final design: how doth it enlarge our minds, and advance them above vulgar amusements, and the admiration of those petty things about which men cark and bicker! How may it serve to work in us pious affections of admiration, reverence, and love toward our great Creator, whose “eternal divinity is clearly seen^a,” whose “glory is declared^b,” whose transcendent perfections and attributes of immense power, wisdom, and goodness are conspicuously displayed, whose particular kindness toward us men doth evidently shine in those his works of nature!

The study of moral philosophy, how exceedingly beneficial may it be to us, suggesting to us the dictates of reason, concerning the nature and faculties of our soul, the chief good and end of our life, the way and means of attaining happiness, the best rules and me-

^a Rom. i. 20.

^b Psalm xix. 1. Psalm viii.

thods of practice; the distinctions between good and evil, the nature of each virtue, and motives to embrace it; the rank wherein we stand in the world, and the duties proper to our relations: by rightly understanding and estimating which things we may know how to behave ourselves decently and soberly toward ourselves, justly and prudently toward our neighbours; we may learn to correct our inclinations, to regulate our appetites, to moderate our passions, to govern our actions, to conduct and wield all our practice well in prosecution of our end, so as to enjoy our being and conveniences of life in constant quiet and peace, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind!

But especially the study of theology, how numberless, unexpressible advantages doth it yield! For,

It enlighteneth our minds with the best knowledge, concerning the most high and worthy objects, in order to the most happy end, with the firmest assurance.

It certainly and perfectly doth inform us concerning the nature and attributes, the will and intentions, the works and providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own nature, our original, our designed end, our whole duty, our certain way of attaining eternal life and felicity.

It exactly teacheth us how we should demean ourselves in all respects piously toward God, justly and charitably toward our neighbour, soberly toward ourselves; without blame in the world, with satisfaction of our conscience, with assured hope of blessed rewards.

It proposeth those encouragements, and exhibiteth

assurances of those helps, which serve potently to engage us in all good practice.

It setteth before us a most complete and lively pattern of all goodness; apt most clearly to direct, most strongly to excite, most obligingly to engage us thereto; especially instructing and inclining to the practice of the most high and hard duties, meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, contempt of all worldly vanities.

It discovereth those sublime mysteries and stupendous wonders of grace^a, whereby God hath demonstrated an incomprehensible kindness to mankind^b, and our obligation to correspondent gratitude.

It representeth manifold arguments and incentives to love God with most intense affection, to confide in him with most firm assurance, to delight in him continually “with joy unspeakable;” which are the noblest, the sweetest, the happiest operations of our soul.

It reareth our hearts from vain thoughts, and mean desires concerning these poor, transitory, earthly things, to contemplations, affections, and hopes toward objects most excellent, eternal, and celestial. ^c

It engageth us to study the book of God, the book of books, the richest mine of most excellent knowledge, containing infallible oracles of truth, and heavenly rules of life; “which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and perfect to every good work.” ^d

And how can we otherwise be so well employed, as in meditation about such things? What occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed angels? What

^a 1 Pet. i. 12.

^b Tit. iii. 4.

^c 2 Cor. iv. 18.

^d 2 Tim. iii. 15. Psalm xix. 10, 11.

heaven is there upon earth like to that of constant feasting our minds and hearts in the contemplation of such objects? Especially considering that this study doth not only yield private benefit to ourselves in forwarding our own salvation, but enableth us by our guidance and encouragement to promote the eternal welfare of others, and by our endeavours to preach in heaven, according to that exhortation of St. Paul pressing on Timothy this study with diligence: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." ^a

So considerable is each part of learning, so extremely profitable are some parts of it: indeed the skill of a liberal art is valuable, as a handsome ornament, as a harmless divertisement, as an useful instrument, upon all occasions; as preferable to all other accomplishments and advantages of person or fortune (beauty, strength, wealth, power, or the like); for who would not purchase any kind of such knowledge at any rate? who would sell it for any price? who would not choose rather to be deformed or impotent in his body, than to have a misshapen and weak mind; to have rather a lank purse than an empty brain; to have no title at all, than to be worth to bear it out? If any would, he is not of Solomon's mind ^b; for of wisdom (by which he meant the comprehension of all knowledge, divine and human) into which the knowledge of natural things, of mat-

^a 1 Tim. iv. 16.

^b 1 Kings, iv. 29.

matics, of poetry, are reckoned ingredients) he saith, “The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Her fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and her revenue than choice silver.”^a

Now, then, considering all these advantages of our calling, if we by our negligence or sluggishness therein do lose them, are we not very ungrateful to God, who gave them, as with a gracious intent for our good, so with expectation that we should improve them to his service? If God had allotted to us the calling of rustics, or of artificers, we had been impious in not diligently following it; but we are abominably ungrateful in neglecting this most incomparably excellent vocation.

Are we not extremely defective to ourselves, if, indulging a wretched humour of laziness, we will not enjoy those sweet pleasures, nor embrace those great profits, to which God in mercy calleth us?

If Solomon said true, “He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul, he that keepeth understanding shall find good^b,” how little friends are we to ourselves, how neglectful of our own welfare, by not using the means of getting wisdom!

“The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge^c,” saith Solomon. What a fool then is he that shunneth it! who, though it be his way and his

^a Prov. iii. 14.; viii. 11. 19.; xvi. 16.; xx. 15.; iv. 7.

^b Prov. xix. 8.

^c Prov. xv. 14.

special duty to seek it, yet neglecteth it; choosing rather to do nothing, or to do worse.

And do we not deserve great blame, displeasure, and disgrace from mankind, if, having such opportunities of qualifying ourselves to do good and serve the public, we by our idleness render ourselves worthless and useless?

How, being slothful in our business, can we answer for our violating the wills, for abusing the goodness, for perverting the charity and bounty of our worthy founders and benefactors, who gave us the good things we enjoy, not to maintain us in idleness, but for supports and encouragements of our industry? How can we excuse ourselves from dishonesty and perfidious dealing, seeing that we are admitted to these enjoyments under condition, and upon confidence (confirmed by our free promises and most solemn engagements) of using them according to their pious intent, that is, in a diligent prosecution of our studies, in order to the service of God and of the public?

Let every scholar, when he mispendeth an hour, or sluggeth on his bed, but imagine that he heareth the voice of those glorious kings, or venerable prelates, or worthy gentlemen, complaining thus, and rating him: Why, sluggard, dost thou against my will possess my estate? why dost thou presume to occupy the place due to an industrious person? why dost thou forget or despise thy obligations to my kindness? Thou art an usurper, a robber, or a purloiner of my goods, which I never intended for such as thee. I challenge thee of

wrong to myself, and of sacrilege toward my God, to whose service I devoted those his gifts to me.

How reproachful will it be to us if that expostulation may concern us, “Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?”^a

If to be a dunce or a bungler in any profession be shameful, how much more ignominious and infamous to a scholar to be such! from whom all men expect that he should excel in intellectual abilities, and be able to help others by his instruction and advice.

Nothing surely would more grate on the heart of one that hath a spark of ingenuity, of modesty, of generous good nature, than to be liable to such an imputation.

To avoid it, therefore, together with all the guilt and all the mischiefs attending on sloth, let each of us, in God’s name, carefully mind his business; and let the grace and blessing of God prosper you therein. Amen.

^a Prov. xvii. 16.

OF THE NATURE AND MEASURES OF CONSCIENCE.

[ROBERT SOUTH, D.D.]

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY AT CHRIST CHURCH,
OXON, OCTOBER 30TH, 1692.

1 JOHN, iii. 21.

*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have confidence
towards God.*

I HAVE discoursed once already upon these words in this place. In which discourse, after I had set down four several false grounds, upon which men, in judging of the safety of their spiritual estate, were apt to found a wrong “confidence towards God,” and shown the falsity of them all; and that there was nothing but a man’s own heart or conscience, which, in this great concern, he could with any safety rely upon; I did, in the next place, cast the farther prosecution of the words under these four following particulars: —

I. To show how the heart or conscience ought to be informed, in order to its founding in us a rational confidence towards God.

II. To show how and by what means we may get

our conscience thus informed, and afterwards preserve and keep it so.

III. To show whence it is that the testimony of conscience, thus informed, comes to be so authentic, and so much to be relied upon. And,

IV. And lastly, to assign some particular cases or instances in which the confidence suggested by it does most eminently show and exert itself.

Upon the first of which heads, to wit, how the heart or conscience ought to be informed, in order to its founding in us a rational confidence towards God, after I had premised something about an erroneous conscience, and shown, both what influence that ought to have upon us, and what regard we ought to have to that, in this matter, I gathered the result of all into this one conclusion; namely, that such a conscience as has not been wanting to itself, in endeavouring the utmost knowledge of its duty, and the clearest information about the will of God that its power, advantages, and opportunities could afford it, is that great internal judge whose absolution is a rational and sure ground of confidence towards God. This I then insisted upon at large, and from thence proceed to the

II. Particular; which was to show how and by what means we might get our conscience thus informed, and afterwards preserve and keep it so.

Where, amongst those many ways and methods which might, no doubt, have been assigned as highly conducing to this purpose, I singled out and insisted upon only these four. As,

1. That the voice of reason, in all the dictates of natural morality, was still carefully to be attended to.

by a strict observance of what it commanded, but especially of what it forbad.

2. That every pious motion from the Spirit of God was tenderly to be cherished, and by no means quenched or checked, either by resistance or neglect.

3. That conscience was still to be kept close to the rule of God's written word; and

4. And lastly, that it was frequently to be examined, and severely accounted with.

These things, also, I then more fully enlarged upon; and so closed up all with a double caution, and that of no small importance as to the case then before us: as,

First, that no man should reckon every doubting or misgiving of his heart, about the safety of his spiritual estate, inconsistent with that confidence towards God which is here spoken of in the text. And, secondly, that no man should account a bare silence of conscience, in not accusing or disturbing him, a sufficient ground for such a confidence. Of both which I then showed the fatal consequence. And so, not to trouble you with any more repetitions than these, which were just and necessary to lay before you the coherence of one thing with another, I shall now proceed to the third of those four particulars first proposed; which was to show whence it is that the testimony of conscience (concerning a man's spiritual estate) comes to be so authentic, and so much to be relied upon.

Now the force and credit of its testimony stands upon this double ground.

1. The high office which it holds immediately from God himself, in the soul of man. And,

2. Those properties or qualities which peculiarly fit it for the discharge of this high office, in all things relating to the soul.

1. And first, for its office. It is no less than God's vicegerent or deputy, doing all things by immediate commission from him. It commands and dictates every thing in God's name; and stamps every word with an almighty authority. So that it is (as it were) a kind of copy or transcript of the Divine sentence, and an interpreter of the sense of Heaven. And from hence it is that sins against conscience (as all sins against light and conviction are, by way of eminence, so called) are of so peculiar and transcendent a guilt; for that every such sin is a daring and direct defiance of the divine authority, as it is signified and reported to a man by his conscience, and thereby ultimately terminates in God himself.

Nay, and this vicegerent of God has one prerogative above all God's other earthly vicegerents; to wit, that it can never be deposed. Such a strange, sacred, and inviolable majesty has God imprinted upon this faculty; not, indeed, as upon an absolute, independent sovereign; but yet with so great a communication of something next to sovereignty, that while it keeps within its proper compass, it is controllable by no mortal power upon earth. For not the greatest monarch in the world can countermand conscience so far, as to make it condemn, where it would otherwise acquit; or acquit, where it would otherwise condemn. No, neither sword nor sceptre can come at it; but it is above and beyond *the reach* of both.

And if it were not for this awful and majestic character which it bears, whence could it be, that the stoutest and bravest hearts droop and sneak when conscience frowns; and the most abject and afflicted wretch feels an unspeakable, and even triumphant joy, when the judge within absolves and applauds him? When a man has done any villanous act, though under countenance of the highest place and power, and under covert of the closest secrecy, his conscience, for all that, strikes him like a clap of thunder, and depresses him to a perpetual trepidation, horror, and poorness of spirit; so that, like Nero, though surrounded with his Roman legions and Prætorian bands, he yet sculks and hides himself, and is ready to fly to every thing for refuge, though he sees nothing to fly from. And all this, because he has heard a condemning sentence from within, which the secret forebodings of his mind tell him will be ratified by a sad and certain execution from above. On the other side, what makes a man so cheerful, so bright and confident in his comforts, but because he finds himself acquitted by God's high commissioner and deputy? Which is as much as a pardon under God's own hand, under the broad seal of Heaven (as I may so express it). For a king never condemns any whom his judges have absolved, nor absolves whom his judges have condemned, whatsoever the people and republicans may.

Now from this principle, that the authority of conscience stands founded upon its vicegerency and deputation under God, several very important inferences may, or rather indeed unavoidably must, ensue. Two of which I shall single out and speak of: as,

First, we collect from hence the absurdity and impertinence; and,

Secondly, the impudence and impiety of most of those pretences of conscience, which have borne such a mighty sway all the world over; and in these poor nations especially.

1. And first, for the absurdity and impertinence of them. What a rattle and a noise has this word conscience made! How many battles has it fought! How many churches has it robbed, ruined, and reformed to ashes! How many laws has it trampled upon, dispensed with, and addressed against! And, in a word, how many governments has it overturned! Such is the mischievous force of a plausible word applied to a detestable thing.

The allegation or plea of conscience ought never to be admitted barely for itself; for when a thing obliges only by a borrowed authority, it is ridiculous to allege it for its own. Take a lieutenant, a commissioner, or ambassador of any prince; and so far as he represents his prince, all that he does or declares under that capacity has the same force and validity as if actually done or declared by the prince himself in person: but then how far does this reach? Why, just so far as he keeps close to his instructions: but when he once baulks them, though what he does may be indeed a public crime or a national mischief, yet it is but a private act, and the doer of it may chance to pay his head for the presumption. For still, as great as the authority of such kind of persons is, it is not founded upon their own will nor upon their own judgment, but upon their commission.

In like manner every dictate of this vicegerent of God, where it has a divine word or precept to back it, carries a divine authority with it. But if no such word can be produced, it may indeed be a strong opinion or persuasion, but it is not conscience; and no one thing in the world has done more mischief and caused more delusions amongst men, than their not distinguishing between conscience and mere opinion or persuasion.

Conscience is a Latin word (though with an English termination), and, according to the very notation of it, imports a double or joint knowledge; to wit, one of a divine law or rule, and the other of a man's own action; and so is properly the application of a general law to a particular instance of practice. The law of God, for example, says, "Thou shalt not steal;" and the mind of man tells him that the taking of such or such a thing from a person lawfully possessed of it is stealing. Whereupon the conscience, joining the knowledge of both these together, pronounces in the name of God that such a particular action ought not to be done. And this is the true procedure of conscience, always supposing a law from God before it pretends to lay any obligation upon man; for still I aver, that conscience neither is nor ought to be its own rule.

I question not, I confess, but mere opinion or persuasion may be every whit as strong, and have as forcible an influence upon a man's actions, as conscience itself. But then, we know, strength or force is one thing, and authority quite another; as a rogue upon the highway may have as strong an arm, and take off a man's head as cleverly, as the executioner. But then

there is a vast disparity in the two actions, when one of them is murder and the other justice: nay, and our Saviour himself told his disciples, “that men should both kill them, and think that in so doing they did God service.” So that here, we see, was a full opinion and persuasion, and a very zealous one too, of the high meritoriousness of what they did; but still there was no law, no word or command of God, to ground it upon; and consequently it was not conscience.

Now, the notion of conscience, thus stated, if firmly kept to, and thoroughly driven home, would effectually baffle and confound all those senseless, though clamorous pretences, of the schismatical opposers of the constitutions of our church: in defence of which, I shall not speak so much as one syllable against the indulgence and toleration granted to these men. No: since they have it, let them (in God’s name) enjoy it, and the government make the best of it. But since I cannot find that the law which tolerates them in their way of worship (and it does no more) does at all forbid us to defend ours, it were earnestly to be wished that all hearty lovers of the Church of England would assert its excellent constitution more vigorously now than ever; and especially in such congregations as this, in which there are so many young persons, upon the well or ill principling of whom (next under God) depends the happiness or misery of this Church and State. For, if such should be generally prevailed upon by hopes or fears, by base examples, by trimming and time-serving (which are but two words for the same thing), to abandon and betray the Church of England, by nauseating her pious,

prudent, and wholesome orders (of which I have seen some scurvy instances), we may rest assured that this will certainly produce confusion, and that confusion will as certainly end in popery.

And therefore, since the liturgy, rites, and ceremonies of our Church have been, and still are, so much cavilled and struck at, and all upon a plea of conscience, it will concern us, as becomes men of sense, seriously to examine the force of this plea; which our adversaries are still setting up against us as the grand pillar and buttress of the good old cause of nonconformity. For, come to any dissenting brother, and ask him, “Why cannot you communicate with the Church of England?” “Oh,” says he, “it is against my conscience; my conscience will not suffer me to pray by a set form, to kneel at the sacrament, to hear divine service read by one in a surplice, or to use the cross in baptism;” or the like.

Very well: and is this the case then, that it is all pure conscience that keeps you from complying with the rule and order of the Church in these matters? If so, then produce me some word or law of God forbidding these things; for conscience never commands or forbids any thing authentically, but there is some law of God which commands or forbids it first; conscience, as might be easily shown, being no distinct power or faculty from the mind of man, but the mind of man itself applying the general rule of God’s law to particular cases and actions. This is truly and properly conscience; and therefore show me such a law, and that either as a necessary dictate of right reason, or a posi-

tive injunction in God's revealed word ; for these two are all the ways by which God speaks to men now-a-days : I say, show me something from hence which countermands or condemns all or any of the forementioned ceremonies of our church, and then I will yield the cause : but if no such reason, no such Scripture can be brought to appear in their behalf against us, but that with screwed face, and doleful whine, they only ply you with senseless harangues of conscience, against carnal ordinances, the dead letter, and human inventions on the one hand, and loud outcries for a farther reformation on the other ; then rest you assured, that they have a design upon your pocket, and that the word conscience is used only as an instrument to pick it : and more particularly (as it calls it) a farther reformation, signifies no more, with reference to the Church, than as if one man should come to another and say, " Sir, I have already taken away your cloak, and do fully intend, if I can, to take away your coat also." This is the true meaning of this word, " farther reformation ; " and so long as you understand it in this sense, you cannot be imposed upon by it.

Well, but if these mighty men at chapter and verse can produce you no scripture to overthrow our church ceremonies, I will undertake to produce scripture enough to warrant them ; even all those places which absolutely enjoin obedience and submission to lawful governors in all " not unlawful things ; " particularly that in 1 Pet. ii. 13., and that in Heb. xiii. 17. (of which two places more again presently), together with the *other* in 1 Cor. xiv., last verse, enjoining order and

decency in God's worship, and in all things relating to it. And consequently, till these men can prove the fore-mentioned things, ordered by our church, to be either intrinsically unlawful, or indecent, I do here affirm, by the authority of the foregoing scriptures, that the use of them, as they stand established amongst us, is necessary ; and that all pretences or pleas of conscience to the contrary are nothing but cant and cheat, flam and delusion. In a word, the ceremonies of the Church of England are as necessary as the injunctions of an undoubtedly lawful authority, the practice of the primitive Church, and the general rules of decency, determined to particulars of the greatest decency, can make them necessary. And I will not, for all the world, be arraigned at the last and great day for disturbing the Church, and disobeying government, and have no better plea for so doing, than what those of the separation were ever yet able to defend themselves by.

But some will here say, perhaps, " If this be all that you require of us, we both can and do bring you scripture against your church ceremonies ; even that which condemns all ' will worship ' (Col. ii. 23.), and such other like places." To which I answer, first, that the " will worship," forbidden in that scripture, is so termed, not from the circumstance, but from the object of religious worship ; and we readily own, that it is by no means in the Church's power to appoint or choose whom or what it will worship. But that does not infer that it is not therefore in the Church's power to appoint how and in what manner it will worship the true *object of religious worship* ; provided that, in so doing,

it observes such rules of decency as are proper, and conducing to that purpose: so that this scripture is wholly irrelative to the case before us, and as impertinently applied to it as any poor text in the Revelation was ever applied to the grave and profound whimsies of some modern interpreters. But, secondly, to this objection about will worship, I answer yet farther, that the forementioned ceremonies of the Church of England are no worship, nor part of God's worship, at all, nor were ever pretended so to be; and if they are not so much as worship, I am sure they cannot be will worship. But we own them only for circumstances, modes, and solemn usages, by which God's worship is orderly and decently performed: I say, we pretend them not to be parts of divine worship; but, for all that, to be such things as the divine worship, in some instance or other, cannot be without: for that which neither does nor can give vital heat, may yet be necessary to preserve it; and he who should strip himself of all that is no part of himself, would quickly find, or rather feel, the inconvenience of such a practice, and have cause to wish for a body as void of sense as such an argument.

Now the consequence in both these cases is perfectly parallel; and if so, you may rest satisfied, that what is nonsense upon a principle of reason, will never be sense upon a principle of religion. But, as touching the necessity of the aforesaid usages in the Church of England, I shall lay down these four propositions.

1. That circumstantials in the worship of God (as *well as in all other human actions*), are so necessary to

it, that it cannot possibly be performed without them.

2. That decency in the circumstantial of God's worship is absolutely necessary.

3. That the general rule and precept of decency is not capable of being reduced to practice, but as it is exemplified in and determined to particular instances. And,

4. Lastly, That there is more of the general nature of decency in those particular usages and ceremonies which the Church of England has pitched upon, than is or can be shown in any other whatsoever.

These things I affirm; and when you have put them all together, let any one give me a solid and sufficient reason for the giving up those few ceremonies of our church, if he can. All the reason that I could ever yet hear alleged by the chief factors for a general intromission of all sorts, sects, and persuasions into our communion, is, that those who separate from us are stiff and obstinate, and will not submit to the rules and orders of our church, and that therefore they ought to be taken away: which is a goodly reason indeed, and every way worthy of the wisdom and integrity of those who allege it! And to show that it is so, let it be but transferred from the ecclesiastical to the civil government, from Church to State; and let all laws be abrogated, which any great or sturdy multitude of men have no mind to submit to: that is, in other words, let laws be made to obey, and not to be obeyed; and upon these terms I doubt not but you will find that kingdom (or rather that commonwealth) finely governed in a short time.

And thus I have shown the absurdity, folly, and impertinence of alleging the obligation of conscience, where there is no law or command of God, mediate or immediate, to found that obligation upon. And yet, as bad as this is, it were well if the bare absurdity of these pretences were the worst thing which we had to charge them with. But it is not so. For our second and next inference from the foregoing principle of the vicegerency of conscience under God, will show us also the daring impudence and downright impiety of many of those fulsome pleas of conscience, which the world has been too often and too scandalously abused by. For a man to sin against his conscience is doubtless a great wickedness: but to make God himself a party in the sin is a much greater; for this is to plead God's authority against God's very law; which doubles the sin, and adds blasphemy to rebellion. And yet such things we have seen done amongst us: an horrid unnatural civil war raised and carried on; the purest and most primitively reformed church in the world laid in the dust; and one of the best and most innocent princes that ever sat upon a throne, by a barbarous unheard-of violence hurried to his grave in a bloody sheet, and not so much as suffered to rest there to this day: and all this by men acting under the most solemn pretences of conscience, that hypocrisy perhaps ever yet presumed to outface the world with.

And are not the principles of those wretches still owned, and their persons sainted, by a race of men of the same stamp, risen up in their stead, the sworn mortal enemies of our church? and yet for whose

sake some projectors amongst us have been turning every stone to transform, mangle, and degrade its noble constitution to the homely mechanic model of those republican, imperfect churches abroad; which, instead of being any rule or pattern to us, ought in all reason to receive one from us. Nay, and so short-sighted are some in their politics, as not to discern, all this while, that it is not the service, but the revenue of our church which is struck at; and not any passages of our liturgy, but the property of our lands, which these reformers would have altered.

For I am sure no other alteration will satisfy dissenting consciences; no, nor this neither, very long, without an utter abolition of all that looks like order or government in the Church. And this we may be sure of, if we do but consider both the inveterate malice of the Romish party, which sets these silly, unthinking tools awork, and withal that monstrous principle, or maxim, which those who divide from us (at least most of them) roundly profess, avow, and govern their consciences by, namely, that in all matters that concern religion or the Church, though a thing or action be never so indifferent or lawful in itself, yet if it be commanded or enjoined by the government, either civil or ecclesiastical, it becomes *ipso facto*, by being so commanded, utterly unlawful, and such as they can by no means with good conscience comply with.

Which one detestable tenet or proposition, carrying in it the very quintessence and vital spirit of all non-conformity, absolutely cashiers and cuts off all church government at one stroke; and is withal such an in-

solent, audacious defiance of Almighty God, under the mask of conscience, as perhaps none in former ages, who so much as wore the name of Christians, ever arrived to or made profession of.

For, to resume the scriptures afore quoted by us; and particularly that in 1 Pet. ii. 13.: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man,” says the Spirit of God, speaking by that Apostle. “But,” say these men, “if the ordinance of man enjoins you the practice of any thing with reference to religion or the Church (though never so lawful in itself), you cannot with a good conscience submit to the ordinance of man in that case.” That is, in other words, God says they must submit; and they say they must not.

Again, in the forementioned Heb. xiii. 17., the Apostle bids them (and, in them, all Christians whatsoever) “to obey those who have the rule over them,” speaking there of church rulers; for he tells them, “that they were such as watched for their souls.” “But,” says the separatist, “if those who have the rule over you should command you any thing about church affairs, you cannot, you ought not, in conscience, to obey them;” forasmuch as, according to that grand principle of theirs, newly specified by us, every such command makes obedience to a thing, otherwise lawful, to become unlawful: and consequently, upon the same principle, rulers must not, cannot be obeyed; unless we could imagine that there may be such a thing as obedience on the one side, where there must be no such thing as a command on the other; which would make pleasant sense of it, indeed, and fit for none but a dissenting

reason, as well as conscience, to assert. For, though these men have given the world too many terrible proofs, of their own example, that there may be commands and no obedience; yet I believe it will put their little logic hard to it, to prove that there can be any obedience where there is no command: and therefore it unanswerably follows that the abettors of the forementioned principles plead conscience in a direct and barefaced contradiction to God's express command.

And now, I beseech you, consider with yourselves, (for it is no slight matter that I am treating of); I say, consider what you ought to judge of those insolent, unaccountable boasts of conscience, which, like so many fireballs or mouth-grenadoes (as I may so term them) are every day thrown at our church. The Apostle bids us "prove all things;" and will you then take conscience at every turn upon its own word, upon the forlorn credit of every bold impostor who pleads it? Will you sell your reason, your church, and your religion, and both of them the best in the world, for a name; and that a wrested, abused, misapplied name? Knaves, when they design some more than ordinary villany, never fail to make use of this plea; and it is, because they always find fools ready to believe it.

But you will say, then, "What course must be taken to fence against this imposture?" Why, truly, the best that I know of I have told you before; namely, that whensoever you hear any of these sly, sanctified sycophants, with turned-up eye and shrug of shoulder, pleading *conscience* for or against any thing or prac-

tice, you would forthwith ask them, what word of God they have to bottom that judgment of their conscience upon? forasmuch as conscience, being God's vicerent, was never commissioned by him to govern us in its own name, but must still have some divine word or law to support and warrant it: and therefore call for such a word, and that either from scripture or from manifest universal reason, and insist upon it, so as not to be put off without it. And if they can produce you no such thing from either of them (as they never can), then rest assured that they are arrant cheats and hypocrites, and that, for all their big words, the conscience of such men is so far from being able to give them any true confidence towards God, that it cannot so much as give them confidence towards a wise and good man, no, nor yet towards themselves, who are far from being either.

And thus I have shown you the first ground upon which the testimony of conscience (concerning a man's spiritual estate) comes to be so authentic, and so much to be relied upon; to wit, the high office which it holds as the vicerent of God himself in the soul of man, together with the two grand inferences drawn from thence: the first of them showing the absurdity, folly, and impertinence of pretending conscience against any thing, when there is no law of God, mediate or immediate, against it; and the other setting forth the intolerable blasphemy and impiety of pretending conscience for any thing which the known law of God is directly against, and stands in open defiance of.

Proceed we now to the second ground, from which

conscience derives the credit of its testimony in judging of our spiritual estate, and that consists in those properties and qualities which so peculiarly fit it for the discharge of its forementioned office in all things relating to the soul ; and these are three.

First: The quickness of its sight.

Secondly: The tenderness of its sense ; and,

Thirdly, and lastly : Its rigorous and impartial way of giving sentence.

Of each of which in their order. And, first, for the extraordinary quickness and sagacity of its sight, in spying out every thing which can any way concern the estate of the soul. As the voice of it (I show) was as loud as thunder, so the sight of it is as piercing and quick as lightning. It presently sees the guilt, and looks through all the flaws and blemishes of a sinful action ; and, on the other side, observes the candidness of a man's very principles, the sincerity of his intentions, and the whole carriage of every circumstance in a virtuous performance. So strict and accurate is this spiritual inquisition.

Upon which account it is, that there is no such thing as perfect secrecy to encourage a rational mind to the perpetration of any base action. For a man must first extinguish and put out the "great light within him," his conscience ; he must get away from himself, and shake off the "thousand witnesses" which he always carries about him, before he can be alone. And where there is no solitude, I am sure there can be no secrecy.

It is confessed, indeed, that a long and a bold course of *sinning* may (as we have shown elsewhere) very

much dim and darken the discerning faculty of conscience. For so the Apostle assures us it did with those in Rom. i. 21. And the same, no doubt, it does every day; but still so as to leave such persons, both then and now, many notable lucid intervals, sufficient to convince them of their deviations from reason and natural religion, and thereby to render them inexcusable; and so, in a word, to stop their mouths, though not save their souls. In short, their conscience was not stark dead, but under a kind of spiritual apoplexy, or *deliquium*. The operation was hindered, but the faculty not destroyed. And now, if conscience be naturally thus apprehensive and sagacious, certainly this ought to be another great ground, over and above its bare authority, why we should trust and rely upon the reports of it. For knowledge is still the ground and reason of trust; and so much as any one has of discernment, so far he is secured from error and deception, and for that cause fit to be confided in. No witness so much to be credited as an eye-witness. And conscience is like the great eye of the world, the sun, always open, always making discoveries. Justly, therefore, may we by the light of it take a view of our condition.

2. Another property or quality of conscience, enabling it to judge so truly of our spiritual estate, is the tenderness of its sense. For as, by the quickness of its sight, it directs us what to do or not to do; so, by this tenderness of its sense, it excuses or accuses us, as we have done or not done according to those directions. And it is altogether as nice, delicate, and tender

in feeling, as it can be perspicacious and quick in seeing. For conscience, you know, is still called and accounted the eye of the soul : and how troublesome is the least mote, or dust falling into the eye ! and how quickly does it weep and water upon the least grievance that afflicts it !

And no less exact is the sense which conscience, preserved in its native purity, has of the least sin. For, as great sins waste, so small ones are enough to wound it ; and every wound (you know) is painful, till it festers beyond recovery. As soon as ever sin gives the blow, conscience is the first thing that feels the smart. No sooner does the poisoned arrow enter, but that begins to bleed inwardly. Sin and sorrow, the venom of one and the anguish of the other, being things inseparable.

Conscience, if truly tender, never complains without a cause ; though, I confess, there is a new-fashioned sort of tenderness of conscience which always does so. But that is like the tenderness of a bog or quagmire, and it is very dangerous coming near it, for fear of being swallowed up by it. For when conscience has once acquired this artificial tenderness, it will strangely enlarge or contract its swallow as it pleases ; so that sometimes a camel shall slide down with ease, where at other times even a gnat may chance to stick by the way. It is, indeed, such a kind of tenderness as makes the person who has it generally very tender of obeying the laws, but never so of breaking them. And therefore, since it is commonly at such variance with the law, I think the law is the fittest thing to deal with it.

In the mean time, let no man deceive himself, or

think that true tenderness of conscience is any thing else but an awful and exact sense of the rule which should direct, and of the law which should govern it. And while it steers by this compass, and is sensible of every declination from it, so long it is truly and properly tender, and fit to be relied upon, whether it checks or approves a man for what he does. For from hence alone springs its excusing or accusing power; all accusation, in the very nature of the thing, still supposing and being founded upon some law: for “where there is no law, there can be no transgression;” and where there can be no transgression, I am sure there ought to be no accusation.

And here, when I speak of law, I mean both the law of God and of man too. For where the matter of a law is a thing not evil, every law of man is virtually, and at a second hand, the law of God also. Forasmuch as it binds in the strength of the divine law, commanding obedience to every ordinance of man; as we have already shown. And therefore all tenderness of conscience against such laws is hypocrisy, and patronised by none but men of design, who look upon it as the fittest engine to get into power by, which, by the way, when they are once possessed of, they generally manage with as little tenderness as they do with conscience: of which we have had but too much experience already, and it would be but ill venturing upon more.

In a word, conscience not acting by and under a law is a boundless, daring, and presumptuous thing: and for any one, by virtue thereof, to challenge to himself a privilege of doing what he will, and of being un-

accountable for what he does, is, in all reason, too much either for man or angel to pretend to.

3. The third and last property of conscience which I shall mention, and which makes the verdict of it so authentic, is its great and rigorous impartiality. For, as its wonderful apprehensiveness made that it could not easily be deceived, so this makes that it will by no means deceive. A judge, you know, may be skilful in understanding a cause, and yet partial in giving sentence. But it is much otherwise with conscience; no artifice can induce it to accuse the innocent, or to absolve the guilty. No, we may as well bribe the light and the day to represent white things black, or black white.

What pitiful things are power, rhetoric, or riches, when they would terrify, dissuade, or buy off conscience from pronouncing sentence according to the merit of a man's actions? For still (as we have shown) conscience is a copy of the divine law; and though judges may be bribed or frightened, yet law cannot. The law is impartial and inflexible; it has no passions or affections; and consequently never accepts persons, nor dispenses with itself.

For let the most potent sinner upon earth speak out, and tell us whether he can command down the clamours and revilings of a guilty conscience, and impose silence upon that bold reprover. He may, perhaps, for a while put on a high and a big look; but can he, for all that, look conscience out of countenance? And he may also dissemble a little forced jollity, that is, he may court his mistress, and quaff his cups, and perhaps

sprinkle them now and then with a few "damm'es;" but who, in the mean time, besides his own wretched miserable self, knows of those secret bitter infusions which that terrible thing called conscience makes into all his draughts? Believe it, most of the appearing mirth in the world is not mirth but art. The wounded spirit is not seen, but walks under a disguise; and still the less you see of it the better it looks.

On the contrary, if we consider the virtuous person, let him declare freely whether ever his conscience checked him for his innocence, or upbraided him for an action of duty. Did it ever bestow any of its hidden lashes or concealed bites on a mind severely pure, chaste, and religious?

But when conscience shall complain, cry out, and recoil, let a man descend into himself with too just a suspicion that all is not right within. For surely that hue and cry was not raised upon him for nothing. The spoils of a rifled innocence are borne away, and the man has stolen something from his own soul, for which he ought to be pursued, and will at last certainly be overtook.

Let every one, therefore, attend the sentence of his conscience; for he may be sure it will not daub nor flatter: it is as severe as law, as impartial as truth: it will neither conceal nor pervert what it knows.

And thus I have done with the third of those four particulars at first proposed, and shown whence and upon what account it is that the testimony of conscience (concerning our spiritual estate) comes to be so authentic and so much to be relied upon; namely,

for that it is fully empowered and commissioned to this great office by God himself; and withal, that it is extremely quicksighted to apprehend and discern; and, moreover, very tender and sensible of every thing that concerns the soul; and, lastly, that it is most exactly and severely impartial in judging of whatsoever comes before it: every one of which qualifications justly contributes to the credit and authority of the sentence which shall be passed by it. And so we are at length arrived at the fourth and last thing proposed from the words; which was, to assign some particular cases or instances in which this confidence towards God, suggested by a rightly-informed conscience, does most eminently show and exert itself.

I shall mention three.

1. In our addresses to God by prayer. When a man shall presume to come and place himself in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, and to ask something of him, while his conscience is all the while smiting him on the face, and telling him what a rebel and traitor he is to the Majesty which he supplicates, surely such an one should think with himself, that the God whom he prays to is greater than his conscience, and pierces into all the filth and baseness of his heart with a much clearer and more severe inspection. And if so, will he not likewise resent the provocation more deeply, and revenge it upon him more terribly, if repentance does not divert the blow? Every such prayer is big with impiety and contradiction, and makes as odious a noise in the ears of God as the harangues of one of those rebel fasts or humiliations

in the year Forty-one, invoking the blessings of Heaven upon such actions and designs as nothing but hell could reward.

One of the most peculiar qualifications of a heart rightly disposed for prayer is a well-grounded confidence of a man's fitness for that duty. In Heb. x. 22., "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," says the Apostle. But whence must this assurance spring? Why, we are told in the very next words of the same verse: "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience:" otherwise the voice of an impure conscience will cry much louder than our prayers, and speak more effectually against us, than these can intercede for us.

And now, if prayer be the great conduit of mercy, by which the blessings of Heaven are derived upon the creature, and the noble instrument of converse between God and the soul; then surely that which renders it ineffectual and loathsome to God must needs be of the most mischievous and destructive consequence to mankind imaginable; and consequently to be removed with all that earnestness and concern with which a man would rid himself of a plague or a mortal infection. For it taints and pollutes every prayer; it turns an oblation into an affront, and the odours of a sacrifice into the exhalations of a carcass; and, in a word, makes the heavens over us brass, denying all passage either to descending mercies or ascending petitions.

But, on the other side, when a man's breast is clear, and the same heart which indites does also encourage

his prayer, when his innocence pushes on the attack and vouches the success; such an one goes boldly to the throne of grace, and his boldness is not greater than his welcome. God recognises the voice of his own Spirit interceding within him; and his prayer is not only followed, but even prevented, with an answer.

2. A second instance in which this confidence towards God does so remarkably show itself is at a time of some notable trial or sharp affliction. When a man's friends shall desert him, his relations disown him, and all dependencies fail him, and, in a word, the whole world frown upon him, certainly it will then be of great moment to have a friend in the court of conscience, which shall (as it were) buoy up his sinking spirit, and speak greater things for him than all these together can declaim against him.

For it is most certain that no height of honour, nor affluence of fortune can keep a man from being miserable, nor indeed contemptible, when an enemy to conscience shall fly at him and take him by the throat; so it is also as certain that no temporal adversity can cut off those inward, secret, invisible supplies of comfort, which conscience shall pour in upon distressed innocence, in spite and in defiance of all worldly calamities.

Naturalists observe, that when the frost seizes wine, they are only the slighter and more watery parts of it that are subject to be congealed; but there is a mighty spirit, which can retreat into the cellar, and there, within its own compass, lie secure from the freezing impression of the element round it.

And just so it is with the spirit of a man, while a good conscience makes it firm and impenetrable : and outward affliction can no more benumb or quell it, than a blast of wind can freeze up the blood in a man's veins, or a little shower of rain soak into his heart, and there quench the principle of life itself.

Take the two greatest instances of misery which, I think, are incident to human nature ; to wit, poverty and shame ; and I dare oppose conscience to them both.

And, first, for poverty. Suppose a man stripped of all, driven out of house and home, and perhaps out of his country too ; (which, having within our memory happened to so many, may too easily (God knows) be supposed again ;) yet, if his conscience shall tell him that it was not for any failure in his own duty, but from the success of another's villany, that all this befel him ; — why then his banishment becomes his preferment, his rags his trophies, his nakedness his ornament ; and so long as his innocence is his repast, he feasts and banquets upon bread and water ; he has disarmed his afflictions, unstrung his miseries ; and though he has not the proper happiness of the world, yet he has the greatest that is to be enjoyed in it.

And for this we might appeal to the experience of those great and good men who, in the late times of rebellion and confusion, were forced into foreign countries for their unshaken firmness and fidelity to the oppressed cause of majesty and religion, whether their conscience did not, like a Fides Achates, still bear them company, stick close to them, and suggest comfort, even when the causes of comfort were invisible ; and, in a word,

verify that great saying of the Apostle in their mouths, "We have nothing, and yet we possess all things."

For it is not barely a man's abridgment in his external accommodations which makes him miserable; but when his conscience shall hit him in the teeth, and tell him that it was his sin and his folly which brought him under these abridgments; that his present scanty meals are but the natural effects of his former over full ones; that it was his tailor and his cook, his fine fashions and his French ragouts, which sequestered him; and, in a word, that he came by his poverty as sinfully as some usually do by their riches; and, consequently, that Providence treats him with all these severities, not by way of trial, but by way of punishment and revenge. The mind, surely, of itself can feel none of the burnings of a fever; but if my fever be occasioned by a surfeit, and that surfeit caused by my sin, it is that which adds fuel to the fiery disease and rage to the distemper.

2. Let us consider also the case of calumny and disgrace. Doubtless the sting of every reproachful speech is the truth of it; and to be conscious is that which gives an edge and keenness to the invective. Otherwise, when conscience shall plead "not guilty" to the charge, a man entertains it not as an indictment, but as a libel. He hears all such calumnies with a generous unconcernment, and receiving them at one ear gives them a free and easy passage through the other: they fall upon him like rain or hail upon an oiled garment; they may make a noise indeed, but can find no entrance.

The very whispers of an acquitting conscience will drown the voice of the loudest slander.

What a long charge of hypocrisy, and many other base things, did Job's friends draw up against him! But he regarded it no more than the dunghill, which he sat upon, while his conscience enabled him to appeal even to God himself; and, in spite of calumny, to assert and hold fast his integrity.

And did not Joseph lie under as black an infamy as the charge of the highest ingratitude and the lewdest villany could fasten upon him? Yet his conscience raised him so much above it, that he scorned so much as to clear himself, or to recriminate the strumpet by a true narrative of the matter. For we read nothing of that in the whole story: such confidence, such greatness of spirit, does a clear conscience give a man; always making him more solicitous to preserve his innocence, than concerned to prove it. And so we come now to the

Third and last instance, in which, above all others, this confidence towards God does most eminently show and exert itself; and that is at the time of death: which surely gives the grand opportunity of trying both the strength and worth of every principle. When a man shall be just about to quit the stage of this world, to put off his mortality, and to deliver up his last accounts to God, at which sad time his memory shall serve him for little else but to terrify him with a sprightly review of his past life and his former extravagancies, stripped of all their pleasure, but retaining their guilt; what is it then that can promise him a fair passage into the

other world, or a comfortable appearance before his dreadful judge, when he is there? Not all the friends and interests, all the riches and honours under heaven, can speak so much as a word for him, or one word of comfort to him, in that condition; they may possibly reproach, but they cannot relieve him.

No, at this disconsolate time, when the busy tempter shall be more than usually apt to vex and trouble him, and the pains of a dying body to hinder and discompose him, and the settlement of worldly affairs to disturb and confound him, and, in a word, all things conspire to make his sick bed grievous and uneasy; nothing can then stand up against all these ruins, and speak life in the midst of death, but a clear conscience.

And the testimony of that shall make the comforts of heaven descend upon his weary head, like a refreshing dew or shower upon a parched ground. It shall give him some lively earnest and secret anticipations of his approaching joy. It shall bid his soul go out of the body undauntedly, and lift up its head with confidence, before saints and angels. Surely the comfort which it conveys at this season is something bigger than the capacities of mortality; mighty and unspeakable; and not to be understood till it comes to be felt.

And now, who would not quit all the pleasures, and trash, and trifles which are apt to captivate the heart of man, and pursue the greatest rigours of piety and austerities of a good life, to purchase to himself such a conscience, as, at the hour of death, when all the friend-

ships of the world shall bid him adieu, and the whole creation turn its back upon him, shall dismiss his soul, and close his eyes with that blessed sentence, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

For he whose conscience enables him to look God in the face with confidence here, shall be sure to see his face also with comfort hereafter.

Which God of his mercy grant to us all: to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

THE WORSHIPPER'S SACRIFICE.

[ANTHONY FARINDON, B.D.]

MICAHA, vi. 6. 8.

*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow
before the high God? Shall I come before him
burnt-offerings? &c.*

*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and
doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and
mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

THERE be many who say, "Who will show us
good?" saith the prophet David, Ps. iv. 6. For
is that which men naturally desire; and here the
phet Micah hath fitted an answer to this question.
hath showed thee, O man, what is good." And
discovery of this good, he useth the same method
the philosopher doth in the description of his
happiness; first shows us what it is not, and
what it is: and as the philosopher shuts out
and riches, and pleasure, as being so little need
that we may be happy without them; so doth the
phet, in the verses going before my text, in a
reject and cast by burnt-offerings, and all the
nial and typical part of Moses' law; all that

busy, expensive, and sacrificing religion, as no whit essential to that good, which he here fixeth up, as upon a pillar, for all eyes to look upon; as being of no great alliance or nearness, nor fit to incorporate itself with that piety which must commend us to God; and, as a true prophet, he doth not only discover to the Jews the common error of their lives, but shows them yet a more excellent way, first asking the question, “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams?”—whether sacrifice be that part of religion with which we may appear and bow before our God, and be accepted? and then in his answer, in the words of my text, quite excluding it, as not absolutely necessary and essential to that which is indeed religion.*

And here the question, “Will the Lord be pleased with sacrifice?” adds emphasis and energy, and makes the denial more strong, and the conclusion in the text more positive and binding than if it had been in plain terms, and formally denied: then this good had been showed naked and alone, and not brought in with the spoils of that hypocrisy which supplants and overthrows it, and usurps both its place and name: “Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings?” is, in effect, I must not do it. That which is good, that which is religion, hath so little relation to it, that it can subsist without it, and most times hath been swallowed up and lost in it. It was in the world before any command came forth for sacrifice, and it is now most glorious when every altar is thrown down, and hath the sweetest savour now there is no

* “Non satis est reprehendisse peccantem si non doceas recti viam.”
Columnel. de Re Rust. l. 11. c. 1.

other smoke. The question puts it out of all question, that this good is best without it. "What will the Lord do to the husbandmen that killed the heir?" Matt. xxi. 41. Our Saviour puts it up by way of question; and you know how terrible the answer. What will he do? What will he not do? "He will miserably destroy those husbandmen." "Is it comely that a woman pray uncovered? Judge in yourselves^a:" you cannot say it is comely. As the Athenians used to ask the guilty person who was arraigned before them, and by sufficient evidence convict of the crime, "Are you not worthy of death?" that they might first give sentence against themselves, and acknowledge the sentence to be just which was to pass upon them; so doth the prophet here ask the sacrificing Jews, who so doted on outward ceremony that they scarce cast an eye or look towards that which was truly the service of God, as if there were no more required at their hands than that which was to be done at the altar, "Shall you bring burnt-offerings; shall you offer up your first-born, the fruit of your body, for the sin of the soul?" Yourselves shall be witnesses against yourselves, and out of your own mouth shall you be condemned. O ye hypocrites! you cannot be so ignorant as to think, nor so bold as to profess, that this is the true service of God. I remember Gregory Nazianzen calls man *πνευματικὸν ἄγαλμα* (and we may call this good in the text so), a spiritual heavenly statue; and as the statuary by his art and with his chisel doth work off all that is unnecessary and superfluous, and having finished and made

^a 1 Cor. 11. 13.

it complete in every part, fixeth it, as the lively representation of some god or goddess, or heroic person, whose memory he would perpetuate in the minds of those who are to look upon it; so doth the prophet Micah here, being to delineate and express the true servant of God in his full and perfect proportion; first, out of the lump and mass which made up the body of the Jews' religion, strikes off that which was least necessary and most abused; all that formality and outward ceremony in which they most pleased themselves. "Burnt-offerings," and "calves of a year old," these he lays aside, as that which may be best spared, as that which God did not require for itself, or for any good there was naturally in it; and then draws him out in every part, in those parts which do indeed make him up in that perfection in which he may shine as a great example of eternal happiness. "Wherewith shalt thou come before the Lord, and bow thyself before the high God?" Not with burnt-offerings; those he puts by, as no essential materials, as the scurf and least considerable part of religion; but with thy heart, and with thy will and affections; with a just, and merciful, and broken heart: with these thou shalt walk with him, or before him, even with justice, and mercy, and humility, with those graces which will make thee like unto him, and transform thee into the image of God, and set thee up as a fair statue and representation of thy Maker. "*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good,*" &c.

Or, if you please, you may conceive of true piety and that which is good, as of a tree of life planted in the midst of Paradise, in the midst of the Church

spreading as it were its branches, whereof these three in the text are the fairest. 1. Justice and uprightness of conversation; a straight and even branch, bearing no fruit but its own. 2. Mercy and liberality; yielding much fruit to those weary and faint souls who gather it, and are refreshed under the shadow of it. And, 3. Humility, a branch well laden, full, and hanging down the head.

More plainly, and for our better proceeding, thus: He taketh away the one, that he may establish the other. He taketh away ceremony and sacrifice, that he may set up true piety, and that which is religion indeed, which here is first termed that which is good in itself and for itself, which sacrifices and all other ceremonious parts of God worship were not. Secondly, manifested, and pointed out to, as with a finger. *Indicavit tibi*; God, by his prophet, hath showed it. Thirdly, published and promulged as a law: "What doth the Lord require of thee?" And, lastly, characterized and drawn out in its principal parts: 1. Justice and honesty. 2. Mercy and liberality. 3. Humility and sincerity of mind; which is the beauty and glory of the rest, and commends them; makes our justice and mercy shine in the full beauty of holiness, when we are this, and do this, as with or before the Lord. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," &c.

These be the particulars: we begin with the first, that piety and true religion is here termed good, in itself and for itself, in opposition to the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Law.

And, first, the sacrifices and ceremonious part of

God's worship were good, but *ex instituto*, because God for some reason was pleased to institute and ordain them; otherwise, in themselves, they were neither good nor evil. They were, before they were enjoined; and men offered them up, not in reference to any command, but out of a voluntary zeal and affection to the honour of God, which they expressed and showed forth in this especial act, in devoting that unto him which was with them of highest esteem, as more due to the giver of all things than to them for whose use they were given.^a God did not command, but did accept them for the zeal and affection of them who offered them up; and he tells them so himself: "I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifice; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice." Jer. vii. 22, 23.

Secondly: when they were commanded, they were commanded, not for any real goodness there was naturally in them, (for what are blood and smoke to the God of spirits?) but brought in for that good effect which the wisdom of God could work out of them, which had nothing of good in them, nor which might commend them, but the end for which they were ordained. And therefore he commanded them, not as desirable in themselves, but by way of condescension, submitting himself, as it were, to the present infirmity and condition of the Jews, who were so strongly

^a Οὐδεὶς τῶν θυσιῶν τὰ ἔλογα θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ πρὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τὴν θέλειν διδάσκειν ἔθυσσε. Respons. ad Orthod. in Operib. Justiniani martyris d Interrog. 83.

affected to this kind of worship; *populum pronum idololatriæ, ejusmodi officiis religioni suæ voluit astringere*, saith Tertullian^a; God put this command as it were a bridle into their mouths, who were too prone to run out beyond their limits; and that they might not offer unto idols, he confines and ties them up to do it to him alone.

And so they were good but *ex comparatione*, but by being compared with something that was worse. If they will sacrifice, it is better they sacrifice to God than to devils; better do this than worse; better do that which, had it not been commanded, had been neither good nor evil, than that which is absolutely evil; better do that which God can bear with than that which he hates; better they should be under the restraint and managing of an indulgent hand, than that they should run into those abominations which a father cannot pardon, and which will make a loving and tender God a consuming fire. Thus they are good being compared with something that is worse; and being put into the scales together, are valuable because they outweigh them: *Et quale est bonum, quod mali comparatio commendat?* saith Tertullian; what good is that which were not so if the evil which it shuts out, and with which it is compared, did not commend it?

- 3. That which is good in itself and its own nature is always so: piety and true religion is older than the world, for it is a part and beam of that wisdom which was with God from everlasting, and it shines forth from one end of the world to the other; hath the same

^a Tertull. adv. Marcion. l. 2.

splendour and brightness, when the fashion of the world changeth every day; and binds alike all the men in the world, and ends not but with it; and in its effects continues when that shall be dissolved, even to all eternity: as it was breathed from God, and flows from his eternal law, so it is always the same, and remains the same till it end in glory. For this there is no *consummatum est*, there is no end. The vail of the Temple is rent in twain, the Temple itself is buried in ruin, and not a stone left upon a stone; every altar is thrown down, the sacrifices and ceremonies abolished; but *quicquid condidit virtus, cœlum est*, that which is truly good is as lasting as the heavens: heaven and earth may pass away, but not one tittle of this good shall fall to the ground.

4. These ceremonies were confined to time and place. "You observe days and months," saith the Apostle (Gal. iv.); yea, and you observe places too: you say, "that Jerusalem is the place," saith the woman of Samaria to our Saviour (John, iv.); but that which is truly good, and in itself is of that nature, that time and place have no power or influence on it, either to shrink it up and contract it, or to bound or circumscribe it, or to put a period to it and cut it off. It is never out of season, never out of its place. Every day is the good man's holiday, and his sacrifice may be offered up at any time; it stays not for the new moon or sabbath-day, but is *res omnium horarum*, may show and display itself at any day, in every hour of that day, and every minute of that hour. Every day, every hour, every *minute* is the good man's sabbath and rest. And as it

is not tied to time, no more is it to place. "All the ends of the world shall remember the Lord," saith the Psalmist; and this "good" in the text may be set up in any part of it. The church is the place, and the market is the place, and the prison may be the place. *Pietas in plateis sibi secretum facit*; religion may build itself an oratory, a chapel, in the midst of the streets, nay, in a stew, in Sodom itself (for there Lot was); and it is the greatest commendation to be good amongst the worst.

Last of all: this ceremonious part of religion was many times omitted, many times dispensed with; but this "good" which is here shown admits no dispensation. Circumcision was dispensed with; sacrifice was dispensed with; the sabbath was dispensed with; but the true service of God was ever in force. Who ever was dispensed with in a moral and positive law? Who ever had this indulgence granted him to defraud or oppress his brother, to be cruel and unmerciful to him, or to walk contrary to his God? Who ever was unjust on earth by a grant and prerogative from heaven? *Aliud sunt imagines, aliud definitiones; imagines prophetant, definitiones gubernant*, saith Tertullian.^a Our lives are not regulated by ceremonies, which pass away as a shadow, but by that law of God which is indispensable: God himself hath dispensed with the one, but never with the other. When sacrifices were omitted, and the sabbath for some reasons was not observed, God complained not; we find that in a manner he doth disclaim sacrifice, as in this place, and in the 1st of Isaiah, and

^a Tertull. de Monogamia, c. 6.

in the 50th Psalm ; but where doth he hold a controversy with his people for omitting it ? What ceremony was there, almost, which was not at some time and upon some just occasion neglected ? How many Easters, how many jubilees do we read of ? But that “good” which is the rule of life is indispensable ; no occasion must withdraw us, no place can bind us, no time hinder us, no necessity force us from it, because it requires no more than our will, which is the same in every place and at every time, and is imputed to us as the deed itself, when we cannot do it, when we have not that power which will reach so far as to bring it into act. That which is good in itself*, *παντὶ, καὶ πάντοτε ὁσαύτως ἔχει*, is so to every man and at all times, and in every place ; is like to Him who is the fountain and author of it, “is so yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever.”

This “good,” then, in the text, may subsist in its full beauty and perfection though no altar smoke ; but a hecatomb, all the beasts in the forest offered up, “ten thousand rivers of oil,” will not make up a just and merciful man. For it was observed even by some of the Jews themselves, that the greatest sacrificers were most commonly the greatest sinners, who, conversing so much with shadows, and lost in the admiration of them, had no thought left empty enough to entertain the more substantial and harder parts of the law ; were *so busy* on the one, that they cast no look on the other ; *but in the strength of their sacrifice, and a high conceit of this their formal worship, walked carelessly and de-*

* Greg. Naz. Or. de Mort.

licately over them, even to that which they forbade; so that to say, "He is a true Israelite, because he is frequent at the altar," is no better an argument than that which the Stoic so much derides*, "He hath a long cloak and beard, therefore he is a great philosopher:" for neither is sacrifice the *ὑλη*, the matter and business of the Israelite, to which his profession binds him, but justice and mercy; nor a grave outside of a philosopher, but reason and the end: *τὸ τέλος*, as the Stoic calls it, of the Israelite, "is to do justice and love mercy;" as the philosopher's is in all his actions to make reason his rule. Cast but your eye back upon some former passages in this prophecy, and you shall find that these sacrificers were idolaters (chap. i.): that they were oppressors (chap. ii.): that in the night they did "study iniquity," and in the morning "practise it:" that they did "covet fields, and take them by violence; oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage" (ver. 1, 2.): that they were cruel and bloody-minded: that they did "eat the flesh of the people, and flay their skins from off them" (iii. 5.). That they were unjust, and ignorant, and ungrateful, in this chapter; all which they did bear with ease, when they led their sacrifice to the altar, and there laid them to vanish away with that smoke. It is a wonderful thing to observe how soon and easily we are persuaded to think well of ourselves in our worst condition; how a form of religion will secure us to tread it under our feet; how the doing that which is not good in itself will lift us up and make us active and cheerful in doing that which is absolutely evil;

* Arian. Epictet. l. 4. c. 8.

how the nearer we come unto hell the less we fear it: bring a sacrifice, set fire to your incense, bow the knee, call upon that God whom you blaspheme, and there will then be no more conscience of sin. And therefore, in this so great abuse, God is forced to give a check to his own command, and precisely to except against that ceremony, that part of worship, which himself for some reasons had enjoined: when their hands were full of blood, then *satur est*, then is he also full, troubled, and wearied with their burnt-offerings (Isa. i. 14.); then he asks the question by his prophet, "Will I be pleased with thousands of rams?" that is, I will not. "Incense is an abomination; he that killeth a bullock is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a sheep, as if he cut off a dog's neck" (Isa. lxvi. 3.); and that of the historian proves true, *plura peccant dum demerentur, quam dum offendunt.*^a Their devotion is turned into sin; their ceremonious diligence doth violate the majesty of God; they provoke him to wrath with their "peace-offerings," and never offend him more than when they worship him.

We may then learn thus much from the prophet's question: That the ceremonious part of God's worship, though enjoined by God, and performed most exactly by men, yet if it be not driven to that end for which it was commanded, is so far from finding acceptance with God, that it is odious and hateful in his sight. For some duties there are which are *relativi juris*, which are commanded for some farther end; as sacrifice, and prayer, and hearing, and fasting; which, if they end.

^a Tacitus, Hist. 1.

in themselves, are but smoke, but words, but noise, but shows, — I may say, but sins. Others there are that have their *ἀνταρκεία* (as Aristotle speaks of sapience), their end in themselves; as, “denying ourselves,” “crucifying the old man,” justice, and mercifulness, and humility: these are done for themselves; for they have no other end, unless it be glory. The first always have reference to the last, and if they come alone, or with no better a retinue than those sins and irregularities which they countenance, then God removes them, as he did the high places^a; cuts them down, as he did the groves; looks upon them with the like detestation as he doth upon idols; as he did upon the brazen serpent, when the people did burn incense to it, which, though it was lifted up in the wilderness by his command, yet by his command it was pulled down and broken to pieces by Hezekiah, and made *nehushtan*, a lump of brass.

For, 1. These outward performances of some part, and the easiest part, of the Law, were not done out of any love to the Law or the Lawgiver. For love is of a quick and operative nature, and cannot rest in shows and formalities, but will draw them home to the end for which they were ordained: love presents the gift, and the heart also, and (before he comes to the altar) makes the worshipper himself a sacrifice. Love doth not stay at the porch, but enters the holy of holies; doth not stay in the beginnings, but hasteth to the end; doth not contract the duty, but extends it to the utmost; doth not draw pictures, but men; doth not

^a 2 Kings, xviii. 4.

sacrifice the beast only, but offers and consumes us; binds us wholly to the work, forceth and constrains us; never lets us rest till we have fulfilled the will of him that commands; improves sacrifice to obedience, hearing, to practice; fasting, to humility and repentance. Love may begin, but never ends in ceremony. And this is the reason why religion hath so many professors, and so few friends; so many salutes, and so many contempts flung upon her; why she is so much spoke of as the bird of Jupiter, that eagle which must carry us to heaven, but hath no more regard than the sparrow on the house-top or the owl in the desert; why it is so much talked of, and so little practised; for men do not love it, but because it carries a kind of majesty and beauty along with it, and strikes every eye that beholds it; because men speak well of her in the gates, (and we cannot but speak well of her, whilst we are men;) therefore we are willing to give her a salute, in the midst of all those horrid and hellish offices which are set up against her; we give her a bow, and let her pass by, as if her shadow could cure us; or we lay hold on the skirts of her garment, touch and kiss them; are loud and busy in the performance of the easiest part of it; "bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar," but not our lusts and irregular desires, but let them fly to every object, every vanity; which is to sacrifice a beast to God, and ourselves to the devil.

2. These formal worshippers do not only not love the command, but they do it for the love of something else: they love oppression, and blood, and injustice better than sacrifice; and all this heat and busy

dustiness at the altar proceeds not from that love which should be kindled and diffused in the heart, but, as the unwholy tongue, is set on fire by hell; hath no other original than an ungrounded and unwarranted love of those profitable and honourable evils which we have set up as our mark, but cannot so fairly reach to, if we stand in open defiance to all religion. And therefore, when that will not join with us, but looks a contrary way to that to which we are pressing forward with so much eagerness, we content ourselves with some part of it, with the weakest, with the poorest, and beggarliest part of it, and make use of it to go along with us, and countenance and secure us in the doing of that which is opposite to it, and with which it cannot subsist: and so well and feelingly we act our parts, that we take ourselves to be great favourites and in high grace with Him whose laws we break; and so procure some rest and ease from those continual clamours which our guiltiness would otherwise raise within us, and walk on with delight and boasting, and through this seeming feigned paradise post on securely to the gates of death. In what triumphant measures doth a Pharisee go from the altar? What a harmless thing is a cheat after a sermon? What a sweet morsel is a widow's house after long prayers? What a piece of justice is oppression after a fast? After so much ceremony, the blood of Abel himself, of the justest man alive, hath no voice.

For, in the third place, these outward performances, this formality in religion, have the same spring and motive with our greatest and foulest sins: the same

cause produceth them, the same considerations promote them, and they are carried to their end on the same wings of our carnal desires. Do you not wonder that I should say, the formality and outward presentiments of our devotion may have the same beginnings with our sins, may have their birth from the same womb; that they draw the same breasts, and, like twins, are born, and nursed, and grow up together? Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? No, it cannot; but both these are salt and brinish; our sacrifice as ill-smelling as our oppression, our fast as displeasing as our sacrilege, and our hearing and prayers cry as loud for vengeance as our oppression. We sacrifice, that we may oppress; we fast, that we may spoil our God; and we pray, that we may devour our brethren: "Like mother, like daughter," saith the prophet Ezekiel^a; they have the same evil beginning, and they are both evil: ambition was the cause of Absalom's rebellion, and ambition sent him to Hebron to pay his vow. 2 Sam. xv. Covetousness made Ahab and Jezebel murderers, and covetousness proclaimed their fast. 1 Kings, xxi. Lust made Shechem the son of Hamor a ravisher, and lust made him a proselyte and circumcised him. Gen. xxxiv. Covetousness made the Pharisee a ravening wolf, and covetousness clothed him in a lamb's skin. Covetousness made his *corban*, and covetousness did disfigure his face, and placed him praying in the synagogues and the corner of the streets: *Ex his causam accipiunt, quibus probantur*, saith Tertullian; they have both the same cause, for the same

^a Ezek. xvi. 44.

motives arise and show them both; the same reason makes the same man both devout and wicked, both abstemious and greedy, both meek and bloody, a seeming saint and a raging devil, a lamb to the eye, and a roaring lion: *Scit enim diabolus alios continentia, alios libidine, occidere*, saith the same father; the devil hath an art to destroy us with the appearance of virtue, as soon as with the poison of sin.

For, in the fourth place, this formality in religion stands in no opposition with him or his designs, but rather advances his kingdom and enlarges his dominion. For how many sacrificers, how many attentive hearers, how many beadsmen, how many professors, are his vassals! How many call upon God, Abba, Father, who are his children! How many openly renounce him, and yet love his wiles; delight in his craft, which is his malice!^a How many never think themselves at liberty but when they are in his snare! And doth not a fair pretence make the fact fouler? Doth not sacrifice raise the voice of our oppression, that it cries louder? Doth not a form of godliness makes in yet more sinful? When we talk of heaven, and love the world, are we not then most earthly, most sensual, most devilish? Is the devil ever more devil than when he is transformed into an angel of light? And therefore the devil himself is a great promoter of this art of par-getting and painting, and makes use of that which we call religion to make men more wicked; loves this foul and monstrous mixture of a sacrificer and an oppressor, of a Christian and a deceiver, of a faster and a blood-

^a " *Ex malitia ingenium habet.*" *Tertull. de Idololat.*

thirsty man : and as he was most enraged and impatient, as Tertullian tells us, to see the works of God brought into subjection under man, who was made according to his image, so is it his pride and glory to see man, and religion itself, brought under these transitory things, and even made servants and slaves unto them. Oh! to this hater of God and man, it is a kind of heaven in hell itself, and in the midst of all his torment, to see this man, whom God created and redeemed, to do him the greatest service in Christ's livery, to see him promote his interest in the name of Christ and religion, to see him under his power and dominion most when he waits most diligently and officiously at the altar of God. The Pharisee was his beloved disciple, when he was on his knees with a disfigured face. These Jews here were his disciples, who did run to the altar, but not from their evil ways; who offered up the blood of beasts to God, and of the innocent to him. He that fasts and oppresses is his disciple, for he gives God his body and the devil his soul: he that prays much and cozens more is his disciple, for he doth but flatter God and serves the enemy; speaks to a God of truth with his lips, but hearkens to the father of lies and deceit. I may say the devil is the great alchymist of the world, to transelement the worst things, to make them more passible, to add a kind of esteem and glory to them. We do not meet with counterfeit iron or copper, but gold and precious stones: these we sophisticate; and when we cannot dig them out of the mine, or take them from the rock, we strive to work them by art out of iron, or copper, or glass, and call them gold and

diamonds. Thus doth the devil raise and sublime the greatest impiety, and gild it over with a sacrifice, with a fast, with devotion, that it may appear in glory, and deceive, if it were possible, the very elect: we see too many deceived with it, who, having no religion, themselves, are yet ready to bow down to its image where-soever they see it, and so fix their eye and devotion upon it that they see not the thief, the oppressor, the atheist, who carries it along with him to destroy that of which it is the image; but take it for that which it represents, as little children and fools take pictures and puppets for men. Is he unclean? who sees that, when he is at the altar? Doth he defraud his brother? who would say so, that should see him on his knees? Hath he false weights and balances? it is impossible, for you may see him every day in the temple. Are his feet swift to shed blood? it cannot be, for he fasteth often: behold how he hangs down his head like a bulrush. The vein of gold is deep in the earth, and we cannot reach it but with sweat and industry: true piety and that which is good is a more rare and precious thing than gold, and the veins of it lie deep; its original is from heaven in Christ, at a huge distance from our carnal desires and lusts; and so requires great anxiety, strong contention, and mighty strivings, to reconcile it to our wills. This pearl is as it were in a far country, and we must sell all to purchase it; the whole man must lose and deny itself to search and find it out; we must lay down all that we have, our understandings, our wills, and affections, at his feet that sells it: and therefore, that we may not trouble nor excruciate our-

selves too much, that we may not ascend into heaven or go down into hell for it, that we may not undergo so much labour and endure so much torment in attaining it, we take a shorter way, and work and fashion something like unto it, which is most contrary to it, and transelement impiety itself, and shadow it over with devotion, and publish it to others, and say within ourselves, this is it. For what Seneca said of philosophy is true of religion, *Adeo res sacra est, ut siquid illi simile sit, etiam mendacium placeat*; it is so sacred and venerable a thing, that we are pleased with its resemblance; and that shall soon have its name that hath but its likeness; that shall be the true pearl, which is but counterfeit; and by this means all religion is confined to the altar, and that shall consecrate that which is not good, and make it appear so. That piety which came from the bosom of the Father, and was conveyed to us by the wisdom of the Son, must be shut up in outward worship, in formality, and ceremony, and show; and that which quite destroys it, and tramples it under our feet, must go under that name, and make us great on earth, though it make us the least in the kingdom of heaven, so that we shall have no place there, but be tumbled down into the lowest pit. As the prophet Isaiah speaks in his first chapter, *Argentum nostrum versum est in scoriam*, our “silver is become dross,” our “wine is mixed with water,” nay, our best silver, our most refined actions, are dross; our wine is gall and bitterness; or, as he speaks in another place, chap. xxx., “all our righteousness” (and he means such formal counterfeit righteousness) “is as a menstruous cloth.”

Again, in the last place : this formality and insincerity is most opposite to God, who is a God of truth, *μονότατος*, *unissimus*, a most single and uncompounded essence, “with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of changing,” saith St. James; no mixture nor composition of divers or contrary things. His justice doth not thwart his mercy, nor his mercy disarm his justice; his providence doth not bind his power, nor his power check his providence; what he is he always is, like unto himself in all his ways. Tertullian gives him these two properties, *simplicitatem et potestatem*, simplicity or uncompoundedness, and power.^a He is *τῶν ἀπλουμένων ἀπλότης*, the singleness of all that are of a pure and single heart^b; and hence the strictest Christians in the first times were called *ἐνιαῖοι*, saith the father, *viri singulares*, men that were one in themselves, and of a single heart; who did strive and press forward as far as mortality and their frail condition would suffer them, *εἰς θεοειδῇ μονάδα*, to the divine unity, to be one in themselves, as God is ever most one, and unity itself. For God, who gave us our soul, looks that we should restore it to him one and entire; not contemplating heaven, and wallowing in the mire; not feeding on ceremony, and loathing of purity; not busy at the altar, and more busy in the world. The civilians will tell us, *dicitur res non reddita, quæ deterior redditur*, that cannot be said to be restored, which is returned worse than it was when it was first put into our hands: and what can accrue to a soul by sacrifice, by ceremony, by any outward formality, if it receive no deeper impressions than

^a *Tert. de Bapt. c. 2.*

^b *Dionys. de Divin. Nomin.*

these can make? if we return it back to him with nothing but words, and noise, and shows, in the posture of a bragging coward with his scarfs and ribbons, and big words, and glorious lies? With no better hatchments than these, we return it far worse than we received it, worse than it was when it was as a smooth unwritten table, when it was such a soul, *qualem habent qui solam habent*^a, such a one which they have, who have it only as other creatures have, to keep them alive and in being, and no more; and better we had breathed it out when it was first breathed in, than that we should thus keep and retain it, and then return it with no better furniture, no better endowed and filled, than with shadows and lies. That which adorns and betters a soul, and makes it fit to be returned, must be as spiritual as itself: self-denial, sincerity, and honesty, love of mercy, humility; these are the riches and glories of a soul, which must make it fit to be presented back again into the hands of its creator. For these, for the advancement of these, were all outward ceremony and formality ordained; and without these, sacrifice is an abomination, and the Brownists' calumny, or rather blasphemy, will be a truth; our preaching will be but preachments; our time of preaching but disputing to an hour-glass; our pulpits prescript places; our solemn fasts but stage-plays, wherein one acts sin, another judgment, a third repentance, and a fourth the Gospel; and the blessed sacrament will be but as a twopenny feast. Or, which is worse, our outward formality and busy diligence in those duties which require the least, will but serve

^a Tertull. de Testim. Anim.

contenebrare ineesta ^a, as the father speaks, to cast a mist and darkness upon our impurities, which may hide them from our own eyes, whom it most concerns to see them, and for a while from others, who see the best of us, (which, indeed, is the worst of us, because it makes us worse and worse,) whilst the evil they shadow and hide is in our very bowels, and spreads itself, and works on insensibly, but most strongly and certainly, to our ruin; and then it appears more ugly and deformed to his pure and all-seeing eye, who never hates an oppressor more than when he sees him at the altar, and is most offended with that fraudulent man who is called Christian. We read in the historian, when Nero had but set his foot into the temple of Vesta, he fell into a fit of trembling, *facinorum recordatione*, saith Tacitus, being shaken with the remembrance of his monstrous crimes. For what should he do in the temple of Vesta, who had defiled his own mother? And how shall we dare to enter God's courts, unless we leave our sins behind us? How dare we speak to a God of truth, who defraud so many? Why should we fast from meat, who make our brethren our meat, and eat them up? At that great day of separation of true and false worshippers, when he shall bespeak those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," the form or reason is not, "for you have sacrificed often, you have fasted often, you have heard much, you were frequent in the temple;" and yet these are holy duties, but they are *ordinata ad aliud*, they were ordained for those that follow, and therefore are not mentioned, but in them

^a Tertull. Apol.

implied: "for I was hungry, and you gave me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was naked, and you clothed me; sick and in prison, and you visited me." Then outward worship hath its glory and reward, when it draws the inward along with it; then the sacrifice hath a sweet-smelling savour, when a just and merciful man offers it up; when I sacrifice and obey, hear and do, pray and endeavour, contemplate and practise, fast and repent: and thus we are made one, fit to be looked upon by him who is oneness itself, not divided betwixt sacrifice and oppression; a form of godliness, and an habitual course in sin; a dissembling with God, and fighting against him; betwixt an hosanna and a crucifige, a professing Christ and crucifying him. In this unity and conjunction, every duty and virtue, as the stars in the firmament, have their several glory, and they make the Israelite, the Christian, a child of light: but if we divide them, or set up some few for all; the easiest, and those which are most attempered to the sense, for those which fight against it; and bring in them for the main, which by themselves are nothing; if all must be sacrifice, if all must be ceremony and outward formality; if this be the conclusion and sum of the whole matter, if this be the body of our worship and religion; then, instead of a blessing and an euge, we shall meet with a frown and a check; and God will question us for appearing before him in strange apparel, which he never put upon us; question us for doing his command, and tell us he never gave any such command, *because he gave it not to this end.* "Will he be pleased *with burnt-offerings?*" with ceremony and formality?

He asks the question with some indignation ; and therefore it is plain he will not, but loathes the sacrifice, as he doth the oppressor and unclean person that brings it.

We see then (that we may yet draw it nearer to us) that there was good reason why God should thus disclaim his own ordinance, because he made it for their sakes, and to an end quite contrary to that to which the Jew carried it ; we see the prophet might well set so low an esteem upon so many thousand rams, because idolaters, and oppressors, and cruel blood-thirsty men offered them. We see sacrifice and all outward ceremony and formality are but as the garment or shadow of Religion, which is turned into a disguise, when she wears it not ; and is nothing, is a delusion, when it doth not follow her. For oppression and sacrilege may put on the same garment ; and the greatest evil that is may cast such a shadow. He that hates God may sacrifice to him ; he that blasphemes him, may praise him ; the hand that strips the poor may put fire to the incense, and the feet that are so swift to shed blood may carry us into the temple. When all is ceremony, all is vain, nay, lighter than vanity ; for in this we do not worship God, but mock him ; give him the skin when he looks for the heart ; we give him shadows for substances, and shows for realities, and leaves for fruit ; and we mortify our lusts and affections, as tragedians die upon the stage, and are the same sinners we were, as wicked as ever. Our religion puts forth nothing but blossoms, or, if it knit, and make some show or *hope of fruit, it is but as we see it in some trees, it*

shoots forth at length, and into a larger proportion and bigness than if it had had its natural concoction and ripened kindly; and then it hath no taste or relish, but withers and rots, and falls off. And thus, when we too much dote on ceremony, we neglect the main work; and when we neglect the work, we fly to ceremony and formality, and lay hold on the altar; we deal with our God as Aristotle of Cyrene did with Lais^a, who promised to bring her back again into her country, if she would help him against his adversaries whom he was to contend with; and when that was done, to make good his oath, drew her picture as like her as art could make it, and carried that: and we fight against the devil as Darius did against Alexander, with pomp, and gaiety, and gilded armour, as his prey, rather than his enemies; and thus we walk in a vain shadow, and trouble ourselves in vain, and, in this region of shows and shadows, dream of happiness, and are miserable; of heaven, and fall a contrary way; as Julius Cæsar dreamed^b that he soared up, and was carried above the clouds, and took Jupiter by the right hand, and the next day was slain in the senate-house.

I will not accuse the foregoing ages of the Church, because, as they were loud for the ceremonious part of God's worship, so were they as sincere in it, and did worship him in spirit and truth, and were equally zealous in them both; and though they raised the first to a great height, yet never suffered it so to over-top the other, as to put out its light; but were, what their outward expressions spake them, as full of piety

^a Clem. Alexand. 3. Strom.

^b Suet. Vit. C. Cæsar.

ceremony; and yet we see that high esteem which they had of the sacraments of the Church led some of them upon those errors which they could not well quit themselves of, but by falling into worse. It is on all hands agreed, that they are not absolutely necessary, not so necessary as the mortifying and denying of ourselves, not so necessary as actual holiness. It is not absolutely necessary to be baptized, for many have not passed that Jordan, yet have been saved; but it is necessary to have the laver of regeneration, and to cleanse ourselves from sin. It is not absolutely necessary to eat the bread and drink the wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, for some cross accident may intervene and put me by; but it is necessary to feed on the bread of life, as necessary as my meat, to do God's will. True piety is absolutely necessary, because none can hinder me from that but myself; but it is not always in every man's power to bring himself to the font, or approach the Lord's table: all that can be said is, that when they may be had, they are absolutely necessary; but they are, therefore, not absolutely necessary, because they cannot always be had; and when they stretched beyond this, they stretched beyond their line, and lost themselves in an ungrounded and unwarranted admiration of these ordinances, which, whilst we look upon them in their proper orb and compass, can never have honour and esteem enough. They put the communion into the mouths of infants, who had but now their being; and into the mouths of the dead, who had indeed a being, but not such a being as to be fit communicants; and St. Austin thought baptism of infants

so absolutely necessary, that not to be baptized was to be damned, and therefore was forced also to create a new hell that was never before heard of, and to find out *mitem damnationem*, a more mild and easy damnation, more fit, as he thought, for the tenderness and innocency of infants.

Now this was but an error in speculation, the error of devout and pious men, who in honour to the Author of the sacraments made them more binding and necessary than they were: and we may learn thus much by this overgreat esteem the first and best Christians, and the most learned amongst them, had of them; that there is more certainly due than hath been given in these latter times, by men who have learned to despise all learning, and whose great devotion it is to quarrel and cry down all devotion; who can find no way to gain the reputation of wisdom but by the fierce and loud impugning of that which hath been practised and commended to succeeding ages by the wisest in their generation; by men who first cry down the determinations of the Church, and then in a scornful and profane pride and animosity deny there is any such collection or body as a church at all.

But our errors in practice are more dangerous, more spreading, more universal. For what is our esteem of the sacraments? More, a great deal, than theirs; and yet less, because it is such which we should not give them, even such which they, whom they are so bold to censure, would have anathematised. We think, or act as if we did, that the water of baptism doth cleanse us, *though* we make ourselves more leopards, fuller of spots,

than before ; that the bread in the eucharist will nourish us up to eternal life, though we feed on husks in all the remainder of our days ; we baptize our children, and promise and vow for them, and then instil those thriving and worldly principles into them which null and cancel the vow we made at the font ; hither we bring them to renounce the world, and at home teach them to love it. And for the Lord's supper, what is commonly our preparation ? A sermon, a few hours of meditation, a seeming farewell to our common affairs, a faint heaving at the heart that will not be lifted up, a sad and demure countenance at the time ; and the next day, nay, before the next day, this mist is shaken off, and we are ready to give Mammon a salute and a cheerful countenance, the world our service, to drudge and toil as that shall lead us, to rail as loud, to revenge as maliciously, to wanton it as sportfully, to cheat as kindly as ever we did long before, when we never so much as thought of a sacrament. And shall we now place all religion, nay any religion, in this ? or call that good, that absolutely good and necessary, for which we are the worse, absolutely the worse, every day ? Well may God ask the question, " Will he be pleased with this ? " Well may he by one prophet ask, " Who hath required it ? " and by another instruct us, and show us yet " a more excellent way."

It was not the error of the Jew alone to forget true and inward sanctity, and to trust upon outward worship and formality ; but sad experience hath taught us that the same error which misled the Jew under his " weak and beggarly elements," hath in the fulness of time

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found admittance and harbour in the breasts of Christians under that perfect law of liberty, in which the grace of God hath appeared unto all men. I am unwilling to make the parallel; it carries with it some probability that some of them had that gross conceit of God, that he fed on the flesh of bulls and drank the blood of goats; for God himself stands up and denies it in the 50th Psalm: "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats? If I be hungry, I will not tell thee." If there were not such conceit, why doth God thus expostulate? And is there no symptom, no indication of this disease in us? Do we not believe that God delights in these pageants and formalities? that he better likes the devotion of the ear than of the heart? Do we not measure out our devotion rather by the many sermons which we have heard, than the many alms we have given? or, which is better, the many evil thoughts which we have stifled, the many unruly desires we have suppressed, the many passions we have subdued, the many temptations which we have conquered? Hath not this been our arithmetic, to cast up our accounts, not by the many good deeds we have done, which may stand for figures or numbers, but by the many reproaches we have given to the times, the many bitter censures we have passed upon men better than ourselves, the many sermons we have heard, which many times (God knows) are no better than ciphers, and by themselves signify no more? Do we not please ourselves with these thoughts, and lift ourselves up into the third heaven? Do we not think that God is well pleased with these thoughts? Do we not believe

they are sacrifices of a sweet-smelling savour unto him? And what is this less than to think that God will eat the flesh of bulls and drink the blood of goats? nay, may it not seem far worse to think that God is fed and delighted with our formalities, which are but lies, and that he is in love with our hypocrisy? I may be bold to say, as gross an error and as opposite to the wisdom of God as the other. It is truly said, *multa non illicita vitiat animus*, that the mind and intention of man may draw an obliquity on those actions which in themselves are lawful; nay, *multa mandata vitiat*, it may make that unlawful which is commanded. Oh, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! but how fearful is it to have his hand fall upon us when we stand at his altar; to see him frown and hear him thunder when we worship him; in anger to question us when we are doing our duty. What a dart would it be to pierce our souls through and through, if God should now send a prophet to us to tell us that our frequenting the church, and coming to his table, are distasteful to him; that our fasts are not such as he hath chosen, and that he hates them as much as he doth our oppression and cruelty, to which they may be as the prologue; that he will have none of the one, because he will have none of the other! And yet, if we terminate religion in these outward formalities, or make them wait upon our lusts, to bring them with more smoothness, with more state and pomp and applause to their end, to that which they look so earnestly upon; if we thus appear before him, he that shall tell us as much of our hearing, and fasting, and

frequenting the church, shall be as true a prophet as Micah the Morasthite was.

And now, to conclude: if you ask me, "wherewith shall you come before the Lord, and bow yourselves before the Most High?" look further into the text, and there you have a full and complete directory: "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God;" with these you may approach his courts, and appear at his altar. *In aram Dei justitia imponitur*, saith Lactantius^a; justice, and mercy, and sincerity are the best and fittest sacrifices for the altar of God, which is the heart of man; an altar that must not be polluted with blood: *hoc qui exhibet, toties sacrificat, quoties bonum aliquid aut pium facit*, the man that is just and merciful doth sacrifice as often as he doth any just and merciful act. Come, then, and appear before him, and offer up these; nor need you fear that ridiculous and ungodly imputation, which presents you to the world under the name of mere moral men: bear it as your crown of rejoicing; it is *stigma Jesu Christi*, a mark of Christ Jesus; and none will lay it upon you as a defect, but they who are not patient of any loss but of their honesty; who have learned an art to join together in one the saint and the deceiver; who can draw down heaven to them with a thought, and yet supplant and overreach their brother as cunningly as the devil doth them. *Bonus vir Caius Seius*^b, Caius Seius is a good man; his only fault is that he is a Christian, would the heathen say; he is a good moral man, but he is not of the elect, that is, one of our faction, saith one Chris-

^a Lactant. de vero Cultu, l. 6. c. 24.

^b Tertull. Apolog.

tian of another. I much wonder how long a good moral man hath been such a monster. What is the Decalogue but an abridgment of morality? What is Christ's Sermon on the Mount but an improvement of that? And shall civil and honest conversation be the mark of a reprobate? Shall nature bring forth a Regulus, a Cato, a Fabricius, just and honest men; and shall grace and the gospel of Christ bring forth nothing but zanies, but players and actors of religion, but pharisees and hypocrites? Or was the new creature, the Christian, raised up to thrust the moral man out of the world? Must all be election and regeneration? Must all religion be carried along in phrases, and words, and noise; and must justice and mercy be exposed as monsters, and flung out into a land of oblivion? Or how can they be elect and regenerate who are not just and merciful? No: the moral man that keeps the commandments is not far from the kingdom of God; and he that is a Christian, and builds up his morality, justice, and mercy upon his faith in Christ; he that keeps a good conscience, and doth to others what he would that others should do unto him, shall enter in and have a mansion there, when these speculative and seraphic hypocrites, who decree for God, and preordain there a place for themselves, shall be shut out of doors.

Come, then, and appear before him with these; with innocence, and integrity, and mercifulness. "Wash your hands in innocency, and compass his altar;" for Christ hath made us "priests unto his Father;" (Rev. i. 6.); there is our ordination: "to offer up spiritual sacrifice" (1 Pet. ii. 5.); there is our duty and performance:

“ by Jesus Christ ; ” there is our seal to make good and sure our acceptance. Chrysostom^a, besides that great sacrifice of the cross, hath found out many more : martyrdom, prayer, justice, alms, praise, compunction, and humility ; and he brings in, too, the preaching of the word, which all make *θυσίαν συλειτουργή*, saith Basil^b, a most magnificent and precious sacrifice. We need not cull out any more than these in the text ; for in offering up these, we shall find the true nature and reason of a sacrifice observed. For to make any thing a true sacrifice, there must be a plain and express change of the thing that is offered. It was a bull or a ram, but it is set apart and consecrate to God ; and it is a sacrifice, and must be slain. And this is remarkable in all these, in which though no death befall us (as in the beast offered in sacrifice), but that death (which is our life), our death to sin ; yet a change there is, which, being made to the honour of God’s majesty, is very pleasing and acceptable in his sight. When we do justly, we have slain the beast, the worst part of us, our love of the world, our filthy lusts, our covetousness and ambition, which are the life and soul of fraud, and violence, and oppression, by which they live, and move, and have their being. When we offer up our goods, there is a change ; for how strong is our affection to them ! How do we adore them as gods ! Are they not in common esteem as our life and blood ? and do we not as willingly part with our breath as with our wealth ? Now he that doth good and distributes, he that scatters his wealth, pours forth his very blood, “ binds the sacri-

^a Chrysost. in Ps. lix.

^b Basil. ep. 87.

fice with cords to the horns of the altar," lets out all worldly desires with his wealth, and hath slain "that sacrifice," saith St. Paul, "with which God is well pleased."

And last of all, humility wastes and consumes us to nothing, makes us an holocaust, a whole burnt-offering, nothing in ourselves, nothing in respect of God; and in this our exinanition, exalts all the graces of God in us, fills us with life and glory, with high apprehensions, with lively anticipations of that which is not seen, but laid up for us in the treasures of heaven. These are the good man's sacrifice, and they naturally flow from this "good" which is here showed in the text, and are the parts of it. These were from the beginning, and shall never be abolished; and if we offer up these, we shall never be questioned nor asked, will God be pleased with these? for he is pleased only with these, and for these, with whatsoever we offer; and he will love us for them, and accept us in Him, who, to sanctify and present these, offered himself an offering, a sacrifice of a sweet-swelling savour; even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Thus have we taken a view of this "good" which is shown in the text, as it stands in opposition with the sacrifices of the Law, and outward formality; and now the vail is drawn, we shall present it in its full beauty and perfection in our next.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

[ISAAC BARROW, D.D.]

AMONG all the duties prescribed to us by our religion, the rendering due worship to God is in nature and for consequence the principal; God thereby being most directly honoured and served, we from it immediately deriving most ample and high benefits, to the performance of which duty we are furnished with excellent direction and assistance from that prayer which our Lord, at several times and upon several occasions, dictated and recommended to his disciples, both as a pattern according to which they should regulate their devotions ("Pray thus^a," or in this manner, saith he in St. Matthew), and as a form in which they should express them ("When you pray, say^b;" that is, say this, or in these words; so he enjoins them in St. Luke). Unto it, therefore, we should carefully attend, as to our best rule; and we should frequently use it as our best matter of devotion^c; to the well performing of both which duties it is requisite that we should distinctly

^a Matt. vi. 9.^b Luke, xi. 2.^c "Quamlibet alia verba dicamus, quæ affectus orantis vel præcedendo format ut clareat, vel consequendo attendit ut crescat, nihil aliud dicimus, quam quod in ista Dominica Oratione positum est, si recte et convenienter oramus." Aug. epist. 121. Vide illum.

understand the particulars contained therein: in order to which purpose, we shall endeavour to explain them. But, first, let us premise a few words in general about prayer.

Prayer, in its latitude of acceptation, doth comprehend all devotion or worship immediately addressed unto Almighty God^a; consisting of praise, which we render to God in regard to his most excellent perfections and glorious works; of submissive gratulation, declaring our satisfaction in all the dispensations of his most wise and just providence; of thanksgiving, for the numberless great benefits we have received from him; of acknowledging our total dependence on him, and our subjection to him; of professing faith in him, and vowing service to him; of confessing the sins we have committed against him, with the guilt and aggravation of them; of deprecating the wrath and punishment due to us for our offences; of petition for all things needful and convenient for us; of intercession for others, whose good we, according to duty or charity, are concerned to desire and promote; prayer, I say, (although, according to its most restrained sense, it only doth signify one of these particulars, namely, the petition of what is needful or expedient for us^b, yet) in its larger acceptation, as it commonly is used, it doth comprise them all. And so we may well take it here; this form, although so very brief, being with so admirable wisdom contrived, as without straining the words beyond their natural im-

^a 1 Tim. ii. 1. *Δηήσεις, προσευχαί, ἐντεύξεις, εὐχαριστίαι.*

^b Οὐ μόνον εὐχῆς ἐστὶ διδασκαλία ἐκεῖνα τὰ ζήματα, ἀλλὰ βίου τελείου παιδαγωγία. *Chrys. tom. v. p. 185.*

portance, we may, applying a moderate attention, discern them all, as to their main substance, couched therein; so that we may indeed reasonably regard this prayer as a complete directory^a, and a full exercise of all our devotion toward God; of devotion, I say, the which (to engage, excite, and encourage us to the careful and constant practice thereof) we may consider enjoined us as a necessary duty, commended to us as a requisite means of good, and a special instrument of all piety, and as a high privilege granted to us by God.

1. It is a natural duty and debt we owe to God (both in correspondence to the design of our being made and endowed with rational capacities agreeable to our relations, and in requital for our being, and for all the good we have, and do continually receive from him), as most highly to love and reverence him in our hearts, so to declare our esteem of his excellences, and our sense of his bounty toward us; to avow the dependence we have upon his will and providence, the obligations we are under to his mercy and goodness; to yield our due homage of respect, submission, and obedience to him. If we do acknowledge a God, our Maker, our Lord, our continual Benefactor, to be, we must consequently acknowledge these performances, in reason, justice, and gratitude, due to him; and God accordingly requires and positively enjoins them: he is “the Lord our God, whom we must worship and serve^b”; the God “whom praise waiteth for; who heareth prayers,” and “to whom,” therefore, “all flesh must come.”^c The Scripture is very frequent in commanding the duty.

^a “Totius Evangelii breviarium.” Tert. de Orat. i. 9.

^b Deut. x. 20. Matt. iv. 10.

^c Psalm lxxv. 2.

2. It is a most useful means, or a condition requisite, for the procurement of benefits and blessings upon us. God hath declared that he doth accept^a, he hath promised that he will reward, all devotions with an honest intention and pure mind offered up unto him ; that he “is nigh unto them that call upon him in truth ;” that he will “be found of them who seek him with all their heart ;” that “he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him ; he will hear their cry, and will save them ;” that “they who seek him shall not want any good thing^b ;” that “whatever we ask in prayer believing, we shall receive ;” that “if we ask it shall be given us ; if we seek, we shall find ; if we knock, it shall be opened to us.”^c Prayer is also a means of procuring a blessing upon all our undertakings ; it sanctifieth every performance, &c. There is no good thing so great and precious, so high above the reach of common power, so strange to expect, or difficult to compass, which we may not easily and surely by this means obtain : relief in all distresses, both of our outward and inward estate ; supplies of all our needs, both corporal and spiritual ; comfort in all our sorrows and sadnesses ; satisfaction in all our doubts and darknesses of mind ; help and strength against all our temptations, we may be confident to obtain, if we duly seek them from the Almighty Dispenser of all good gifts : sure promises there are, and obvious examples hereof, too many to be now recited ; as, on the other hand, they that will neglect this duty,

^a Εὐχῆς δικάας οὐκ ἀψηκοος Θεός.

^b Psalm. xxxiv. 10. ; cxlv. 18, 19. ; x. 17. Jer. xxix. 13.

^c 1 John, iii. 22. Matt. xxi. 22. ; vii. 7. Luke, xi. 9. John, xiv. 13. ; xv. 7. ; xvi. 23.

that will not vouchsafe to seek help and remedy of God, may be sure to want it; shall certainly suffer for their proud contempt, profane diffidence, or foolish sloth. "You will not," saith our Saviour, "come to me, that ye may have life^a;" no wonder, then, if they do not receive it, if they will not go thither for it where only it is to be had. All good things are in God's hand; and we shall never by any force or policy get them thence without his will, moved by entreaty. All good gifts come from heaven; and thence we shall never fetch them down without ascending thither in our hearts and affections: spiritual goods, especially, are so high above us, that we can never reach them otherwise than by God's help, by humble supplication obtained.

3. It is not only a means, by impetration acquiring for us, but is an effectual instrument working in us, all true good; it is the channel by which God conveyeth spiritual light into our minds, and spiritual vigour into our hearts. It is both the seed and the food of spiritual life^b, by which all holy dispositions of soul, and all honest resolutions of practice, are bred and nourished, are augmented and strengthened in us. It exciteth, it quickeneth, it maintaineth all pious affections^c: the love of God can no otherwise than by it be kindled, fomented, or kept in life; without it we certainly shall have an estrangement and an aversion from him: it alone can maintain a constant reverence and awe of God, keeping him in our thoughts, and making us to live as in his presence; it chiefly enliveneth and exerciseth our

^a John, v. 40.

^b "Difficillimum est opus orare." *Luth.*

^c Fervour of spirit. Rom. xii. 11. τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες.

faith and our hope in God; it is that which begetteth in our hearts a savoury relish of divine things, which sweeteneth and endeareth to our souls the practice of piety, which only can enable us with delight and alacrity to obey God's commandments; it alone can raise our minds from the cares and concernments of this world, to a sense and desire of heavenly things. By it God imparteth strength to subdue bad inclinations, to restrain sensual appetites, to compress irregular passions; to evade the allurements to evil, and the discouragements from good, which this world always presenteth; to support, also, with patience and equanimity, the many crosses and troubles we must surely meet with therein. It is, in short, the only strong bulwark against temptation and sin, the only sure guard of piety and a good conscience: no man, indeed, can be a faithful servant to God, a real friend to goodness, a serious practiser of duty, without a constant tenor of devotion.

4. It is a most high privilege and advantage to us, that we are allowed to pray and address our devotions to God. To have a free access to the presence and audience of an earthly prince (to the effect of receiving from him all that we could desire) would be deemed a matter of great honour and much advantage: how much more is it so to us, that we are admitted to the presence and ear of the great King of all the world; so mighty in power, so large in bounty, so full of goodness and pity, so thoroughly able, so exceedingly willing to grant and perform our requests! How sweet a thing, *of what comfort and benefit* is it, to have the liberty of

“pouring out our souls and our hearts,” as the Psalmist speaks^a, “before God ;” of disburdening our minds of all their cares, their desires, their doubts, their griefs, and anxieties, into the breast of so kind a friend, so wise a counsellor, so able a helper; who alone, indeed, can afford relief, ease, satisfaction, and comfort to us! Considering which things, we shall appear not only very disobedient to God, and highly ungrateful toward him (who so infinitely condescends in vouchsafing to us, “dust and ashes^b,” vile and unworthy creatures, leave to speak and converse with him), but very injurious and unfaithful to ourselves and to our own good, if we neglect this duty commanded, or slight this privilege indulged to us.

In the due performance of which we are directed and assisted by this form of prayer, composed and dictated for that purpose by Him, who best knew what we ought to pray for, and how we ought to pray^c; what matter of desire, what manner of address, what disposition of mind would be most pleasing and acceptable to his Father, would most become and befit us in our approaches to him. We might consequently observe many things concerning those particulars discernible in this form: the sublimity, the gravity, the necessity, the singular choiceness of the matter, together with the fit order and just disposition thereof, according to the natural precedence of things in dignity or necessity; *the full brevity*, the deep plainness, the comely simplicity of expression; the lowly reverence signified therein,

^a Psalm lxii. 8.; xlii. 4.

^b Gen. xviii. 27.

^c *Deus solus docere potuit, ut se vellet orari.* Tert. de Orat. c. 9.

accompanied with due faith and confidence: these, and the like virtues directive of our devotion, we might observe running generally through the whole texture of this venerable form. But we shall rather choose to take notice of them as they shall offer themselves in their particular places; to the consideration of which in order we now do apply ourselves.

Our Father, which art in heaven.

“Our Father.” Upon this title, or manner of compellation, we may first observe, that although our Saviour prescribeth this form as a pattern, and an exercise of private prayer to be performed in the closet, (and alone in secret^a, as is expressed in the Gospel,) yet he directeth us to make our addresses to God in a style of plurality, saying, not “my Father,” but “our Father;” thereby, it seems, implying, 1. That we should in our prayers consider and acknowledge the universality of God’s power and goodness. 2. That we should not, in our conceit, proudly and vainly appropriate or engross the regard of God unto ourselves; but remember that our brethren have an equal share with us therein. 3. That in all our devotions we should be mindful of those common bands which knit us together as men and as Christians; the band of nature and humanity; the more strict ties of common faith and hope; of manifold relations unto God that made us, and our Saviour that redeemed us, and the Holy Spirit who animateth and quickeneth us, and combineth us in spiritual union. 4. That we should bear such hearty good-will and

^a Matt. vi. 6. 9.

charitable affection toward others, as not only to seek and desire our own particular and private good, but that of all men; especially of all good Christians, who in a peculiar manner are God's children and our brethren. "He did not bid us say, 'my Father,' but 'our Father, who art in heaven;' that, being taught that we have a common father, we might show a brotherly good-will one toward another," saith St. Chrysostom.^a

As for the appellation "Father," it doth mind us of our relation to God, who upon many grounds, and in divers high respects, is our father: by nature, for that he gave us our being, and made us after his own image; by providence, for that he continually preserveth and maintaineth us; by grace, for that he reneweth us to his image in righteousness and holiness; by adoption, for that he alloweth us the benefit and privilege of his children, assigning an eternal inheritance to us. Of this relation, which as creatures, as men, as Christians, we bear to God, it mindeth us, and consequently how we ought, in correspondence thereto, to behave ourselves; yielding to him all respect, affection, and observance; demeaning ourselves in all things as becomes such a relation and rank. This, indeed, of all God's names, titles, and attributes, is chosen as most suitable to the nature of the present duty; as most encouraging to the performance thereof; as most fully implying the dispositions required in us, when we apply ourselves thereto.

^a Οὐ γὰρ ἐκέλευε λέγειν, πάτερ μου, ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἀλλὰ πάτερ ἡμῶν, ἵνα κοινὸν πατέρα ἔχουν διδασκόμενοι, ἀδελφικὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους δεικνύωμεν εὐνοίαν. tom. v. p. 186.

Our Saviour used to compare prayer to a son's asking nourishment of his father^a; arguing thence what success and benefit we may expect from it: we come therein to God, not directly, as to a lord or master, to receive commands; but rather as to a father, to request from him the sustenance of our life, and supply of our needs; to render withal unto him our thankful acknowledgments, for having continuedly done those things for us; and to demonstrate our dutiful respect and affection toward him. It is natural for children, in any danger, strait, or want, to fly to their parents for shelter, relief, and succour; and it is so likewise for us to have recourse unto God in all those cases wherein no visible means of help appear from elsewhere; and to do so, the title of "Father" doth encourage us, signifying not only power and authority over us, but affection and dearness toward us: the name God importing his excellent perfections; the name Lord minding us of his power and empire over us, with the like titles declarative of his supereminent majesty, might deter us, being conscious of our meanness and unworthiness, from approaching to him; but the word father is attractive and emboldening: thinking on that, we shall be apt to conceive hope, that, how mean, how unworthy soever, yet, being his children, he will not reject or refuse us; for, "If men, being evil, do give good gifts unto their children; how much more will our Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"^b

It also plainly intimates how qualified and disposed

^a Matt. vii. 9. Luke, xi. 11.

^b Matt. vii. 11.

in mind we should come to God; namely, with high reverence, with humble affection, with hearty gratitude; as to the Author of our being, to Him that hath continually preserved and brought us up; from whose care and providence we have received all the good we have ever enjoyed; from whose mercy and favour we can only expect any good for the future. By calling God “father,” we avow ourselves obliged to honour and love him incomparably beyond all things; we also declare our faith and hope in God; that we believe him well affected toward us, and willing to do us good^a; and that we thence hope to receive the good desirable from him: the which are dispositions necessary to the due performance of this duty. It also implieth, that we should come thereto with purity of mind and good conscience; which is also requisite to the same extent: for, if we are conscious of undutiful and disobedient carriage toward God, how can we call him father? with what heart or face can we assume to ourselves the title of children? “If,” saith St. Peter^b, “ye call upon him as a father, who impartially judges according to every man’s work, (that is, who only esteemeth them for his children who truly behave themselves as becometh children,) pass the time of your pilgrimage in fear,” or in reverence towards God. We may add, that we also hereby may be supposed to express our charity toward our brethren, who bear unto God, the Father of all men, the same common relation. But I proceed: —

^a Matt. xxi. 22. James, i. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

^b 1 Pet. i. 17.

Which art in heaven.

God Almighty is substantially present every where; but he doth not every where in effects discover himself alike, nor with equal splendour in all places display the beams of his glorious majesty. The Scripture frequently mentioneth a place of his special residence, (seated in regions of inaccessible light, above the reach, not only of our sense, but of our fancy and conception), where his royal court, his presence-chamber, his imperial throne, are; where he is more immediately attended upon by the glorious angels and blessed saints; which place is called “heaven,” the “highest heavens;” the τὰ ὑψιστα, the “highest places^a;” by his presence wherein God is described here, as for distinction from all other parents here on earth, so to increase reverence in us toward him, while we reflect upon his super-eminent glory and majesty, and to raise our hearts from these inferior things unto desire, and hope, and love of heavenly things; “withdrawing,” saith St. Chrysostom, “him that prays from earth, and fastening him to the places on high, and to the mansions above.”^b But so much for the title.

The first sentence of our prayer is,

Hallowed (or sanctified) be thy name.

Let us first (with St. Chrysostom) observe the direction we hence receive in all our prayers to have a

^a Luke, ii. 14.; xix. 38. Matt. xxi. 9.

^b Τῆς γῆς ἀπάγων τὸν εὐχόμενον, καὶ τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς προσηλῶν χωρίαις, καὶ ταῖς ἀνω διατριβαῖς.

prime and principal regard to the glory of God; not seeking any thing concerning our own good before his praise: that for the order. As to the substance of this particular, we may consider, that sanctity implying a discrimination, a distance, an exaltment in nature or use of the thing, which is denominated thereby; and God's "name" signifying himself, with all that we can know of him; himself, as however discovered or declared, with all that relates to him, and bears his inscription; we do here accordingly express our due acknowledgments and desires; for, by a rare complication, this sentence doth involve both praise and petition; doth express both our acknowledgment of what is, and our desire of what should be: we do, I say, hereby partly acknowledge and praise the supereminent perfections of God above all things, in all kind of excellency, joining in that seraphical doxology (which to utter is the continual employment of the blessed spirits above, who incessantly "day and night" cry out), "Holy, holy, holy^a;" confessing with the heavenly host in the Apocalypse, "that he is worthy of all honour, glory, and power;" we do also partly declare our hearty wishes, that God may be every where had in highest veneration; that all things relating to him may receive their due regard; that all honour and praise, all duty and service, may in a peculiar manner be rendered unto him by all men, by all creatures, by ourselves especially: that all minds may entertain good and worthy opinions of him; all tongues speak well of him, celebrate and

^a Rev. iv. 8. 11. Τὸ ἁγιασθήτω ὡτὶ τοῦ δοξασθήτω εἴρηται. Chrys. tom. v. p. 186.

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bless him; all creatures yield adoration to his name and obedience to his will: that he be worshipped in truth and sincerity, with zeal and fervency: this particularly in the prophet Isaiah^a, and by St. Peter^b, called "sanctifying God's name," in opposition to idolatrous and profane religion. "Sanctify the Lord & hosts himself, and let him be your fear, let him be your dread," saith the prophet: and, "Fear not their fear nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," saith the Apostle. Thus do we here pray and wish in respect to all men, and to all creatures capable of thus sanctifying God's name; but more particularly we pray for ourselves, that God would grant to us that we, by our religious and righteous conversation may bring honour to his name^c; so that "men seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in heaven." "Vouchsafe," saith he, "that we may live so purely, that all men by us may glorify thee:" & descants St. Chrysostom.^d

Thy kingdom come.

This petition, or devout wish, being subordinate to the former, as expressing a main particular of that which is there generally desired, (we here, to the glory of God, desiring a successful and speedy propagation of true religion,) seems, in its direct and immediate sense to respect the state of things in that time, more especially befitting our Lord's disciples then, when the

^a Isa. viii. 13.; xxix. 23.

^b 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15.

^c Matt. v. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 12.

^d Καταξίωσον, φησιν, ὅπως ἡμᾶς βιοῦν καθαρῶς, ὥς δι' ἡμῶν θεοδοξέειν, &c. Chrys. in Matt. vi.

kingdom of God (that is, the state of religion under the evangelical dispensation) was coming and approaching; according to that of our Saviour in St. Luke: "I say unto you of a truth, there be some of you standing here that shall not taste death, till they see the kingdom of God^a:" whence it did become them, in zeal to God's glory, and charity for men's salvation, to desire that Christianity might soon effectually be propagated over the world, being generally entertained by men with due faith and obedience; that is, that all men willingly might acknowledge God as their Lord and Maker, worshipping and serving him in truth; that they might receive his blessed Son Jesus Christ as their King and Saviour, heartily embracing his doctrine, and humbly submitting to his laws: to which purpose our Lord enjoins his disciples to "pray, that the Lord of the harvest would send labourers into his harvest^b;" and St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to pray, "that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified."^c And, in parity of reason, upon the same grounds we are concerned and obliged to desire that Christian religion may be settled and confirmed; may grow and be increased; may prosper and flourish in the world; that God's authority may, to the largest extension of place, to the highest intention of degree, universally and perfectly be maintained and promoted, both in external profession and real effect; the minds of all men being subdued to the obedience of faith, and avowing the subjection due to him, and truly yielding obedience to

^a Luke, ix. 27. Matt. xvi. 28.; iii. 2.

^b Matt. ix. 38.

^c 2 Thess. iii. 1.

all his most just and holy laws. Thus should we pray that God's kingdom may come; particularly desiring that it may so come into our own hearts; humbly imploring his grace, that he thereby would rule in our hearts, quelling in them all exorbitant passions and vicious desires, protecting them from all spiritual enemies, disposing them to an entire subjection to his will, and a willing compliance with all his commandments^a: for this is "the kingdom of God," which, as our Lord telleth us, "is within us^b;" the which "doth not," as St. Paul teacheth us, "consist in meat and drink" (in any outward formal performances), "but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost^c;" that is, in obedience to God's will, and in the comfortable consequences thereof: this is "the kingdom of God," which we are enjoined, before any worldly accommodations, "first to seek."^d

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

This sentence is likewise complicated of praise, good desire, and petition; for we thereby first do acknowledge the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God in all resolutions of his will and dispensations of his providence.

1. We profess our approbation of all God's counsels, our complacence and satisfaction in all his proceedings, our cheerful submission and consent to all his pleasure; joining our suffrage, and saying in harmony with that

^a Τυραννοῦμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν τοῦ σώματος παθημάτων, καὶ μυρίας πειρασμῶν δεχόμενοι προσβολὰς τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ χρήσομεν βασιλείας, ἵνα μὴ βασιλεύσῃ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ σώματι ἡμῶν, &c. Chrys.

^b Luke, xvii. 21.

^c Rom. xiv. 17.

^d Matt. vi. 33.

blessed choir in the Revelation, “Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints.”^a We disclaim our own judgments and conceits, we renounce our own desires and designs, so far as they appear inconsistent with the determinations of God’s wisdom, or discordant with his pleasure; saying after our Lord, “Let not my will, but thine be done.”^b

2. We do also express our desire, that as in heaven all things with a free and undisturbed course do pass according to God’s will and good liking, every intimation of his pleasure finding there a most entire and ready compliance from those perfectly loyal and pious spirits (those “ministers of his, that do his pleasure^c,” as the Psalmist calls them), so that here on earth the gracious designs of God may be accomplished without opposition or rub; that none should presume, as the Pharisees and lawyers are said to do^d, ἀθετεῖν τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ, to disappoint or defeat God’s counsel: ἀπωθεῖσθαι, to thrust away or repulse God’s word, as the Jews did in the Acts^e; to resist, provoke, or defy God by obstinate disobedience, as many are said to do in the Scriptures; but that every where a free, humble, hearty, and full obedience be rendered to his commands.

3. We do also pray that God would grant us the grace willingly to perform whatever he requires of us, “perfecting us,” as the Apostle speaketh^f, “in every good work to do his will, and working in us that

^a Rev. xv. 3.

^d Luke, vii. 30.

^b Luke, xxii. 42.

^e Acts, xiii. 46.

^c Psalm ciii. 20.

^f Heb. xiii. 21.

which is well-pleasing in his sight;" contentedly to bear whatever he layeth upon us: that God would bestow upon us a perfect resignation of our wills unto his will; a cheerful acquiescence in that state and station wherein he hath placed us^a; a submissive patience in all adversities, whereinto he disposeth us to fall; a constant readiness, with satisfaction and thankfulness, without reluctancy or repining, to receive whatever cometh from his will, whether grateful or distasteful to our present sense; acknowledging his wisdom, his goodness, his justice in all his dealings towards us; heartily saying with good Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good^b;" with Hezekiah, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken^c;" with David, "Behold, here I am; let him do to me as seemeth good to him^d;" with Job, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" and, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord^e": yea, it were well, if we could, after the heathen philosopher, upon all occasions with our hearts say, *εἰ ταύτῃ Θεῷ φίλον, ταύτῃ γενέσθω*, if God will have it so, so let it be^f; if we could observe those rules and precepts which even the philosophers so much inculcate^g; to commit

Phil. iv. 11.

^b 1 Sam. iii. 18.^c 2 Kings, xx. 19.^d 2 Sam. xv. 26.^e Job, ii. 10.; i. 21. Psalm xxxvii. 5.; lv. 22.^f Epict. Ench. 38. Plat. Criton.

^g Τὸ ὑπόλοιπον τοῦ βίου διέξελθε, ὡς Θεοῖς ἐπιτετροφῶς τὰ σεαυτοῦ πάντα, &c. Ant. iv. 31. Ἀσπαζόμενος τὰ συμβαίοντα. Ant. iii. 4. 16.; ii. 17.; x. 11.; xii. 1. Ant. vii. 31.; x. 11. Sen. De Or. Sap. 32. "Ego secundum naturam vivo, si totum me illi dedo. Optimum est Deum; quo auctore cuncta proveniunt sine murmuratione comitari, &c. — hic est magnus animus, qui se Deo tradidit." Sen. ep. 37. 54. 71, &c. De Prov. 5.

all our affairs to God, to love and embrace (hug) all events; to follow and to accompany God; to yield, deliver, and resign ourselves up to him; (*Deo se præbere, dedere, tradere, &c.*) and the like.

Give us this day our daily bread.

I shall not stand to criticise upon the hard word here used, translated “daily;” I only say, that of two senses offering themselves, both are probable, and by good authority countenanced; both are proper and suitable to the matter or nature of the thing: according to one we pray for the bread τοῦ ἐπιόντος, of the time to come, or of that future life which it shall please God to allow us; according to the other, we request bread ἐπὶ τὸ εἶναι, which is necessary for our being, and the preservation of our lives^a; joining both together (which is more sure and safe), we pray for a competent provision toward the maintenance of our life hereafter, during our appointed time: that for the sense. Upon the petition itself we observe, —

1. That after we have rendered our due tribute of praise and respect unto God, we are allowed and directed to request of him good things for ourselves; beginning, as nature prompteth, with the preservation of our beings and lives; whereby we become capable of receiving and enjoying other good things.

2. By doing which we also do imply the sense we have of our total dependence upon God; avowing ourselves to subsist by his care and bounty; disclaiming,

^a Ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, τούτέστιν ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ σώματος διαβαίνοντα, καὶ συγκροτῆσαι ταύτην δυνάμενον. Chrys. tom. v. 187.

consequently, all confidence in any other means to maintain or support us, in any store we have laid up, or estate we pretend to; in any contrivance or industry we can use; in any succour of friends or relations; for that, notwithstanding all these, we do need our daily bread to be dealt to us by God, and must continually beg it as a gift from his hands.

3. We are by that word, *σήμερον*, “this day,” taught our duty (signifying withal our performance thereof) of being willing continually to rely upon God; not affecting to be ever so much beforehand, as not to need God’s constant assistance: we ask not, that God would give us at once what may serve us for ever, and may put us out of any fear to want hereafter; we ask not for that which may suffice for a long time, for many years, many months, many days; but that God would give us to-day, or rather “day by day;” (*τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν*, as it is expressed in St. Luke^a;) that is, that he would continually dispense to us what is needful for us. We should not, therefore, desire to have an estate settled upon us; to live by ourselves, or on our own incomes; to be set out of God’s house, or immediate protection and care: this, in itself, cannot be (for God cannot alienate his goods from himself, nor can we subsist out of his hand), nor must we desire it should be; it is a part of atheism, or infidelity, of heathenish profaneness and folly, to desire it; (“These things,” saith our Lord^b, “do the Gentiles seek;” that is, they are covetous of wealth and careful for provisions, to live without dependence upon God;) but we must esteem God’s providence

^a Luke, xi. 3.^b Matt. vi. 32.

our surest estate, God's bounty our best treasure, God's fatherly care our most certain and most comfortable support; "casting all our care on him," as being assured that "he careth for us;" will not "leave nor forsake us;" will not withhold what is necessary for our comfortable sustenance.^a

4. It is here intimated how sober and moderate our appetites should be, in regard both to the quality and quantity of the things we use: we are directed to ask *τροφὴν, οὐ τρυφὴν*, as St. Chrysostom says, necessary food, not luxurious plenty or delicacy; it is bread (the most simple, homely, and common diet); that is, such accommodations as are necessary to maintain our lives, and satisfy our natural desires; not superfluities, serving to please our wanton appetites, or humour our curious fancies; it is not variety, daintiness, elegancy, or splendour, we should affect to enjoy, but be content to have our necessities supplied with the coarsest diet and the meanest apparel, if our condition requireth it, or God's providence in an honest way allotteth no other to us; we may soberly and thankfully enjoy what God sends, but we should not presume to ask for or desire other than this.

And for the measure, we learn to ask only for so much as shall be fit to maintain us; not for rich or plentiful store; not for full barns, or for heaps of treasure; not for wherewith to glut or pamper ourselves; but for daily bread, a moderate provision, then to be dealt to us, when we need it.

It follows, —

^a Matt. vi. 25 1 Pet. v. 7. Heb. xiii. 5. Phil. iv. 6.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. “Our trespasses;” it is “our debts” (ὀφειλήματα) in St. Matthew; “our sins” (ἁμαρτίας) in St. Luke; and they who “trespass against us” are in both Evangelists called “our debtors;” for he that injures another is obnoxious and in debt to him; owing him satisfaction, either by making reparation or undergoing punishment.

After the preservation of our beings (the foundation of enjoying other good things), our first care, we see, ought to be concerning the welfare of our better part and state; which chiefly consists in the terms whereon we stand toward God, upon whose favour all our happiness dependeth, and from whose displeasure all our misery must proceed. Since, therefore, we all do stand obnoxious to God's wrath and justice; having omitted many duties which we owe to him, having committed manifold offences against him; it is therefore most expedient that we first endeavour to get him reconciled to us, by the forgiveness of our debts and offences: concerning which remission, upon what account it is necessary, upon what terms it is granted, by what means it is obtained, in what manner it is dispensed by God, I have elsewhere touched, and it is not seasonable now farther to insist thereon; only it may be pertinent here to observe, —

1. That this being the first of petitions (formally such, and) purely spiritual, we are hereby admonished to lay the foundation of our devotions in humility; that we are obliged, before we presume to ask any thing of God concerning our chief happiness and well-being,

to reflect upon, acknowledge, and confess our unworthiness; not coming to our prayers as the Pharisee did, doting upon our worthy qualities and good deeds; but like the poor publican, with a sense of our infirmities and miscarriages; so as to be ready to acknowledge ourselves, as indeed we all are, guilty of many and great sins: this is here implied; for, in requesting pardon for our sins, we confess ourselves to be sinners, and to need God's mercy.

2. We may hence learn the necessity and the excellency of that benefit we here beg. When the Psalmist applied himself to praise God for his benefits, this he set in the first place, as most needful and considerable to him: "Bless the Lord, O my soul," said he, "and forget not all his benefits" (or, rather, not any of his benefits), "who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases^a;" and answerably, it is the first particular benefit we pray for.

3. We must take notice that we are obliged to go to our devotions with universal charity and good-will toward others; "to lift up," as St. Paul enjoineth^b, "holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (or without wrath and dissension), to depose all enmity (as our Lord adviseth), before we bring our oblation "to the altar^c" of God; reserving no spite or grudge toward any man, but having a heart clear of all ill-will and desire of revenge; being in affection of mind toward others, as we do wish and hope and pray that God would be toward us: such, in all reason, equity, and ingenuity, should our disposition be; and such God

^a Psalm ciii. 2, 3.

^b 1 Tim. ii. 8.

^c Matt. v. 23.

requires it to be; and such we do assert and promise it to be; implying also a compact with God, no otherwise to desire or expect his favour and mercy toward us, than as we resemble him in kind and merciful intentions toward our brethren: it is implied, on God's part, that he vouchsafes pardon only upon these terms; yea, more, that he doth truly promise pardon upon our performing this condition; so our Saviour, purposely reflecting on this petition, doth afterward expound it: "For," saith he, "if you forgive to men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you^a:" it also implies a consent on our parts, and submission to this condition, as most equal and reasonable; so that, if we break it, if we do retain any uncharitable inclinations, we deal falsely with God; we forfeit all pretence to favour and mercy from him; we are neither qualified for mercy, nor shall obtain it from God.

Lead us not into temptation.

Temptation is sometime taken, in a middle and indifferent sense, for any occasion by which the moral quality of persons (their virtue or vice) is examined and discovered: so God is said to have "tempted Abraham^b," when he propounded to him the offering up of his son; so he tempted the Israelites, by leading them in that long journey through the wilderness, "that he might know what was in their heart, whether they would keep his commandments or no^c:" so he likewise tempted them by permitting seducers to do wonderful things, "that he might know whether they did love

^a Matt. vi. 14.

^b Gen. xxii. 1.

^c Deut. viii. 2. *ἵνα πειδοῖ σε.*

the Lord with all their heart and with all their soul^a:" and because affliction is of such a nature as to try the temper, disposition, and intentions of men, therefore temptation often is used for affliction. It seemeth also sometimes put in a good sense, for an occasion designed to exercise, or to improve, or to declare the virtues of a person; so the inconveniences and crosses incident to our nature and condition here, the which our Lord did undergo, are by St. Luke^b and others of the Apostles styled temptations^c; so the "fiery trial" in St. Peter^d was *εἰς πειρασμὸν*, to exercise and refine them, "that," saith he, "the trial of their faith might be to praise, and honour, and glory;" so St. James^e biddeth Christians to "rejoice when they fall into divers temptations;" that is, when they meet with opportunities of exercising their faith and patience; and so we may understand that place in Deuteronomy^f: "Who," it is said, "fed thee with manna, that he might humble and prove thee (or tempt thee, *ἵνα ἐκπειράσῃ σε*, say the Seventy), to do thee good at thy latter end." "That he might tempt thee;" that is, that he might render thee approved; might exercise and improve thy dependence on God, thy patience, thy obedience. But the word is commonly taken in a worse sense, for an occasion presented with ill purpose, or naturally tending and not easily avoided, of falling into sin; a stumbling-block, a snare; as when St. Paul saith, "that they who will be rich, do fall (*εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα*) into temptation and a

^a Deut. xiii. 3.^c Heb. ii. 18.; iv. 15.^e James, i. 2.^b Luke, xxii. 28.^d 1 Pet. iv. 12.; i. 6, 7.^f Deut. viii. 16.

snare^a," thus St. James assureth us that "God tempteth no man^b;" that is, doth not intend to seduce or inveigle any man into sin. Yet, because nothing in the world, either good or bad, doth happen without God's permission and governance, and the devil himself must obtain licence from God before he can tempt any man, or do any mischief (as we see in Job's case^c, and in the history of Ahab^d); since God seeth whatever is done, and with greatest ease could hinder it; and doth not, otherwise than for some good end, suffer any evil to be designed or achieved; it is the style of Scripture to attribute such things, in some sense, to him: as when God is said "to send Joseph into Egypt to preserve life^e;" whereas, in truth, his brethren, out of envy and ill-will, did sell him thither: and God is said to "move David to number the people^f;" whereas, indeed, Satan (as it is elsewhere affirmed) "provoked him to number them^g:" and that horrid tragedy acted by the Jews upon our blessed Saviour is said to be brought to pass by "the hand and determinate counsel of God^h;" because God, foreseeing the temptations which those men should incur of committing such acts, and their inclinations to perform them, did resolve not to interpose his power in hindrance of them, but, suffering them to proceed, would turn their mischievous practices to an excellently good end, and use them as instruments of his just, holy, and gracious purposes. Thus, then, whereas by temptation here is meant any occasion alluring or pro-

^a 1 Tim. vi. 9.^d 1 Kings, xxi. 22.^g 1 Chron. xxi. 1.^b James, i. 13.^e Gen. xlv. 5.^h Acts, ii. 23.; iv. 28.^c Job, ii. 6.^f 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

voking to sin, or withdrawing from duty, with a violence, all things considered, exceeding our strength to resist or avoid; (or, however, such an one that is apt to overthrow us;) God may be said to bring them into it, whom, in justice, he permits to be exposed thereto; although he do no otherwise intermeddle or concur therein, than by not affording, or by withdrawing, his especial direction and assistance; leaving them without check blindly or wilfully to follow the sway of their own tempers, the instinct of their vain minds, the bent of their corrupt wills, the violence of their unruly passions and appetites; letting them to fall into the manifold snares of false opinion, evil custom, and contagious example, which the world sets before them; (the world, which, by its fair promises and pleasing flatteries enticeth to sin, or by its angry frowns and fierce threats discourageth from goodness;) permitting the devil, without control or impediment, by his wiles to delude and seduce them: which kind of proceeding of God with men is clearly represented in the 81st Psalm; where of the Israelites God says, that, having signally declared his pleasure to them, and by promise of great benefits invited them to observe it, upon their wilful neglect he dealt thus with them: "But," says God there, "my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts; and they walked in their own counsels."^a In such manner, if God, provoked thereto by our heinous miscarriages, doth justly bring us into,

^a Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12.

or doth let us “enter into temptation,” (as our Lord elsewhere expresseth it: “Pray,” saith he, “that ye enter not into temptation^a,”) we shall infallibly run into many grievous sins and desperate mischiefs; no less surely than we shall wander and stumble in the dark, than we shall slide and fall in the most slippery places, and sometimes be entangled when we do walk in the midst of snares, surrounded with traps innumerable, most cunningly laid to catch us: “It is not,” saith the prophet, “in man to direct his steps^b,” so as to go straight and upright; it is not in him to see his duty, to bend his inclinations to compliance therewith; to restrain his appetites when sensible objects forcibly press on them; to govern his passions when they are vehemently stirred to disorderly motion: we do continually need God’s instruction to guide us, God’s hand to “uphold us^c,” God’s care and help to guard us. When, therefore, I say, our condition and circumstances do minister dangerous occasions of sin; when our vain and weak tempers do incline or betray us thereto; when the world would smile or frown us into it; when the devil violently solicits or thrusts us on toward it; thus to be destitute of God’s grace, thus to be left to ourselves, is the most horrible judgment that can be. In such cases and seasons God’s interposal is necessary, either to remove those temptations, or to support and defend us from the prevalence of them, φυλάσσων ἀπταίστους, “keeping us from stumbling and

^a Luke, xxii. 40. 46.^b Jer. x. 23.^c Psalm xxxvii. 23, 24.

falling^a,” as St. Jude speaks; “not suffering us,” as St. Paul expresseth it, “to be tempted above what we are able, but making with the temptation also a way to escape, so that we shall be able to sustain it.”^b

That God would please to do this for us, we do here pray; and in pursuance of this petition we subjoin that which, in part, may pass for an illustration thereof, (implying an antithesis serving to that purpose; for, “delivering from evil” importeth the same with *ῥύεσθαι ἐκ πειρασμοῦ*, being “rescued from temptation,” in St. Peter: “The Lord,” saith he, “knoweth how to rescue the godly out of temptation^c,” and *τηρεῖν ἐκ τῆς ὥρας πειρασμοῦ*, “to preserve from the time of temptation^d,” in the Revelation, which are opposed to bringing into temptation,) partly it may be supposed an improvement thereof; “delivering from evil” signifying, perhaps, somewhat more than not permitting us to incur occasions strongly inviting us to evil, even the effectual keeping us from being overborne or complying with it. But let us consider that petition itself.

But deliver us from evil.

“From evil,” *ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*. St. Chrysostom takes it for the devil, who is the *ὁ πονηρὸς*, “the evil one,” the tempter, who seduceth us to evil: but we shall take it according to the more common acceptation. “From evil;” that is, principally, from sin, or evil, moral and *spiritual*; the only evil, simply and in its own nature

^a Jude, 24.

^c 2 Pet. ii. 9.

^b 1 Cor. x. 23.

^d Rev. iii. 10.

such, and the root of all other evil; from that, and consequently from all mischief (evil, natural and temporal, or evil, penal and afflictive) which may grow upon, or sprout from thence. As for such evils as these: the want of things necessary or convenient for us; bodily disease and pain; disappointment in our designs, and ill success in our undertakings; disgrace and reproach upon our good names; dangers, difficulties, and distresses concerning our outward estate; distractions, vexations, and troubles of mind about temporal matters, with the like evils, (in some sense, in some degree evils, or appearing such to our natural sense and fancy,) we may, indeed, deprecate them (as even our Lord himself did) with submission (as he did) to the wisdom and will of God, in case it pleaseth him and he thinketh fit to remove them; but all these things being but names and empty sounds in comparison to spiritual and eternal evils, (such as are vicious distempers of mind, indispositions to serve God, ill progress in our spiritual affairs, dissatisfaction concerning our state in respect to God, actual transgression of God's holy will and law, incurring God's displeasure and disfavour, being deprived of his grace and assistance, wanting the communion and comfort of his Holy Spirit; remorse of conscience and anguish of spirit for having violated or neglected our duty; blindness of mind; hardness of heart; want of love, reverence, devotion toward God; of charity and good-will toward our neighbour; of sobriety, humility, regularity of passion, and calmness of temper, in respect to

ourselves and the inward frame of our souls : these, I say, and such like evils,) we should absolutely request of God that he in mercy would deliver and free us from them, they being irreconcilably repugnant to his will and glory, and inconsistent with our eternal welfare : yet even these and all other things we do request only in general terms, leaving the distinct matter, and manner, and measure, according to which they should be dispensed, to the wisdom and goodness of God ; who “doth,” as our Lord telleth us, “know what things we have need of, before we ask him^a,” and “is not only able,” as St. Paul says, “but willing also, to do for us superabundantly above what we can ask or think.”^b We are hereby, it seems, taught this point of good manners in our devotion, not to be tediously punctual and particular in our prayers, as if God needed our information, or were apt to neglect the particulars concerning our good.

We shut up all with a doxology, most suitable to the nature of devotion, signifying our due faith, our affection, and our reverence toward God.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

That is, for thou hast a perpetual and unmoveable authority, whereby justly to dispose of all things ; thou hast an indefectible and irresistible power, whereby thou canst effect whatever seems just and good to thee ; wherefore we profess only to rely upon, and seek help

^a Matt. vi. 8.

^b Eph. iii. 20.

n thee ; with hope and confidence we address ourselves to thee for the supply of our needs. "Thine is glory:" all honour and reverence, all love and thankfulness are due unto thee ; therefore we render adorations and acknowledgments to thee. Even so thee, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be for ever ascribed all glory and praise.
men.

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